Toward a Better Understanding of Uncommon Loyalty: An Application in Sport

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Denice

and baby Thomas. Play like a champion today, son.

And in loving memory of my grandmother Freda.

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I share this achievement with the best family a man could have. The support from my parents, wife, son, brother, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins and in-laws was there long before I commenced PhD studies, and will be there long after this thesis turns to dust. While I am grateful to be finished, I enjoyed the journey tremendously.

Abstract

Some brands seem to garner uncommon levels of loyalty from their customers. These brands can weather economic downturns, long-term competitive disadvantage and continual performance failures to emerge with a core of dedicated, committed, and loyal consumers. Good examples of this phenomenon come from sports. Some sports teams have fans who proudly proclaim their loyalty as well as financially support their team through attendance, yet live their entire life without witnessing their team win a championship. Why would they do this, when switching brands is possible?

This study used the sports industry to explore the minds and analyse the behaviours of sports fans in order to learn more about their uncommon loyalty towards their favourite team. A comprehensive review of loyalty and sports literature revealed researchers were better defining and measuring the dimensions of loyalty, while sports marketers were able to explain more of the variability in attendance. There was still a gap, however, that needed filling to explain this *uncommon* loyalty.

One of the features of the sporting industry is the ritualised way in which it is consumed across the world. Fans of every sport have rituals and

superstitions to help them enjoy the spectacle, socialise with other like-minded fans, and reduce some of the anxiety of watching their team play. Although some sports researchers have touched on the topic of ritual, none has defined, measured or applied it to desirable outcomes such as commitment and attendance.

This study uses a sample of 651 attendees at an Australian Football League game to explore ritual behaviour, define the game-day rituals observed, and design a scale to measure sports fan ritual in order to investigate the link between ritual, and attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. Fan ritual was found to be two-dimensional with personal and social rituals. The associations between social ritual and commitment, and social ritual and attendance are positive and significant, while personal ritual does not significantly influence commitment or attendance. The findings support previous research that found a significant and positive relationship between identification and attendance, and extend previous research by finding a significant and positive relationship between social rituals and attendance.

For academic researchers, the findings are important to establish the role of ritual in consumption and loyalty, while opening future research opportunities in other product categories. For sports marketers, the results

indicate the importance of developing and facilitating consumption rituals tied to game day attendance, with a view to generating uncommon loyalty.

Presentations and Publications Based on This Research

Neale, L. and Funk D. (2006), Investigating Motivation, Attitudinal Loyalty and Attendance Behaviour with Fans of Australian Football, International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship, 7 (4), 307-317.

- Publication used in Chapters 2, 3 and 5 of this thesis

Neale, L. and Mizerski, R. (2005), Validating a Scale for Measuring Sports Fan Rituals, in Proceedings of the Sport Marketing Association's 3rd Annual Conference. Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

- Presentation used in Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis

Neale, L. and Funk, D. (2005), Fan Motivation and Loyalty: Extending the Sport Interest Inventory (SII) to the Australian Football League, in ANZMAC 2005: Broadening the Boundaries, Sharon Purchase (Ed.). University of Western Australia, Perth, WA.

- Conference paper used in Chapters 2 and 5 of this thesis

The co-authors of these presentations and publications have kindly given permission to allow use of these works in this thesis.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

On October 14, 1908, nine young men belonging to the Chicago Cubs Baseball Club were triumphantly cheered from the West Side Grounds in Chicago, having beaten the Detroit Tigers four games to one to secure back-to-back World Series Championships. They were at the pinnacle of the sport and the future for the Cubs looked bright as they were on the way to becoming one of baseball's first dynasties.

Fast forward to today. It is almost 100 years later, and the Cubs have yet to win another World Series. This void of success even includes a 40 year stretch of futility in the mid-1900s with no postseason (finals) appearances. Despite this lack of success over a century, more than 115 million spectators have kept the turnstiles at the West Side Grounds and now Wrigley Field clicking over as loyal Cubs fans continue to support their team by coming to the ballpark. Cubs' home games attendance levels are above the Major League Baseball average and in 1995 Wrigley Field was, on average 73% full over 78 home games (Burton & Cornilles, 1998).

Regardless of whether it is positive word-of-mouth, resistance to switch brands, repeat purchase or brand advocacy, the outcomes of loyalty interest marketers. Sports teams around the world seem to garner

uncommonly high levels of both behavioural loyalty in the form of repeat attendance, and attitudinal loyalty in the form of a psychological commitment to the team.

In some cases this loyalty to the team comes during sustained periods of poor on-field performances. Behavioural examples of loyalty in sports abound, from the Cubs example above, to West Bromwich Albion of England's First Division (now Premier League) Football competition who haven't won the League championship since 1920. Returning to Chicago, the Chicago Bulls of the National Basketball Association (NBA) last won a championship in 1998, but then lost their superstar Michael Jordan to retirement (and the Washington Wizards), and for two years had one of the worst win-loss records in the league. Yet while the NBA as a whole saw declining attendance levels during 1999 and 2000 (King & Mullen, 2000), the Bulls maintained full home game attendances during this period, and their merchandise was among the most popular in the NBA (Gladden & Funk, 2001).

These poorly performing teams manage to keep a steady and loyal spectator base, with fans of the team willing to publicly defend their team, exhibit their allegiance by wearing team merchandise and attending games. Paradoxically, winning does not always translate into higher attendances.

In the 1970s baseball's Oakland Athletics won five division pennants, and won the World Series three times. Yet during most of this period their attendance was below the Major League Baseball average (Scully, 1995).

Is the Loyalty Uncommon?

By most measures, high performing successful sports teams are those with sustained winning records, and poorly performing teams are those with sustained losing records. Winning is important in sports, and important to fans of their teams. Why then do fans of the Chicago Cubs not simply switch to the recently crowned champion Chicago White Sox? Cubs' fans exhibit strong brand loyalty *despite* the brand performing poorly. For most other consumer goods and services, consumers would switch when their brand is performing poorly (K. Parker & Stuart, 1997). Indeed East (1997 p. 18) writes that "People do not continue to buy a brand that persistently disappoints; instead they break their habit and try something else".

For example, most consumers would at least consider switching mobile phone service providers if their current provider failed to maintain adequate network coverage over a certain time period. Yet, most fans of losing sports teams such as the Cubs do not switch their allegiance to another team, even after years of on-field futility (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001). It is true that professional teams in the United States enjoy monopoly protection, which leaves some fans with no alternative (local)

team. This is not the case with the Cubs, where Chicago also hosts the White Sox, whose home ballpark is just a short drive from Wrigley Field. Sports fans also have alternatives in the forms of sports entertainment (sporting and non-sporting), so staying loyal to one team is not strictly necessary.

Here is another signal the loyalty may be uncommon. Ehrenburg (1990; , 1988) and others contend that for frequently purchased consumer goods in stable markets, the study of past behaviour and the use of the negative binomial distribution (NBD) has been particularly effective in predicting penetration rates and frequency of buyers of a brand or category. If the purchase rate of tickets over a football season does not follow the NBD, then it strengthens the case that sports fans can be termed uncommonly loyal.

So is this exceptional loyalty distinctive to sports and sports teams, or is there something about fan behaviour that can be investigated that will lead to insights that can be used to stabilise brand loyalty and consumer retention behaviour for other underperforming goods and services? And do all sports teams engender the same type of attendance loyalty? Bristow and Sebastian (2001) compare the attendance levels of the Cubs with that of the Minnesota Twins. During 1999, both teams had similarly poor records,

both finished last in their division, and had comparable ticket prices but the Cubs drew nearly 3 million fans through the turnstiles, while the Twins managed to draw just over 1 million fans. It can be argued that it is not useful to compare attendances for teams such as the Cubs and the Twins, because:

- The Cubs are a much older brand with more history
- Chicago is a much bigger market that Minneapolis/St Paul and
- Wrigley Field is an iconic "destination" ballpark.

However, no two teams are exactly the same, with the same history. The large discrepancy in attendances above warrants investigation.

Why Sport?

Sport and sporting teams occupy a unique place in people's minds and in society.

> *Sport is the single most influential currency of mass communication in the world, sport cuts right through the differences of age, education, language, gender, and social and economic status, all those differences that tend to divide us* (Lipsyte, 1977 as cited in Meenaghan & O'Sullivan, 1999 p. 245).

Economically, the worldwide impact of sport is growing, and there is a corresponding increase in social and cultural prominence (Pitts & Stotlar,

2002). Within our fast moving culture of consumerism and brand choice, sports teams offer stability and engender high levels of loyalty. For example, in a study on the loyalty of customers towards brands, Sebastian and Bristow (2000) measured "loyalty proneness" towards six products among 200 college students in America. They found significantly higher brand loyalty scores for professional sports teams than the other five consumer products tested (blue jeans, tennis shoes, pizza, soft drinks and beer). While loyalty towards sporting teams can take forms other than purchase (for example watching on television), the study shows a greater connection to sporting teams than consumer goods.

To illustrate the economic impact of sport, the recent football World Cup in Germany provides interesting figures. FIFA, the sport's governing body, estimates the cumulative worldwide television audience will be 30 billion people, which is seven times larger than that of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Along the way, FIFA raised €1.9 billion in TV rights, new media rights, sponsorship and ticket sales. Sport is big money around the world.

Sport and research using sport also has the added benefit "of being fun" (Wolfe et al., 2005 p. 183). While fun may not be motive enough to drive a doctoral dissertation, research in psychology suggests emotions such as joy, interest and amusement can increase attention and drive more creative

thinking (Frederickson, 2003), all of which are important to breathe life into management research (Dutton, 2003). The stunning growth of management books written by coaches and former star players suggests marketing practitioners and other corporate executives are attentive of the lessons learned in the sporting realm (Wolfe et al., 2005).

Keidel (1987) argues that sport can serve as a living laboratory for organisational research as "the world of sports mirrors the world of work" (p. 591). Other areas may not have the same advantages as the sporting domain such as participants motivated to provide data, along with frequent opportunities to collect data at regularly scheduled sporting events (Goff & Tollison, 1990).

Sport is also unique in that managers of financially successful sports teams can even condemn their customer base without fear of boycott or recrimination. For example, in the Australian Football League (AFL) the Collingwood Magpies coach Michael Malthouse, criticised 4000 former members who failed to renew their 2006 membership after a sub-standard 2005 season (Conn, 2006). The coach even went further to intimate that the Magpies would not welcome back the recalcitrant fans if their fair-weather behaviour continued. Imagine the manager of a toothpaste manufacturer telling former purchasers not to buy their product in the future!

How fanatical can people become about their sports teams? A shocking case of aggression left a San Francisco Giants fan dead after being shot by a rival Los Angeles Dodger fan while leaving a Giants-Dodgers game in the eighth inning (AP, 2003). Other than fanatical baseball rivalry, authorities could attribute no other motive to the shooting.

A more infamous sports-related murder was that of Columbian football defender Andres Escobar. Columbian football fans had high expectations of their team's chances as they entered the 1994 World Cup finals after defeating powerhouse Argentina 5-0 in a lead-up game. In a first round match-up with an underdog team from the United States, Escobar scored an own goal (deflected the ball into his team's net) and shockingly the USA won the game 2-1, causing Columbia's campaign demise. Ten days later a gunman shot Escobar 12 times as he left a Medellin nightclub. The gunman reportedly shouted "GOAL" after firing each round into the football player's body. While some researchers have focussed on the negative outcomes of fanaticism (Dimmock & Grove, 2005), there are also positive consequences such as heightened loyalty, increased word-of-mouth, stronger customer-based brand equity and a deeper psychological commitment to the brand.

Finally, sport mirrors society (Eitzen, 1999), and has a mass fanatical appeal matched perhaps only by religion. Qualities such as mystique, tradition, nostalgia and cultural fixation are common to both (Frey & Eitzen, 1991). This becomes important as this thesis investigates the world of ritual behaviour.

Winning Isn't Everything

Most people would assume, and there is empirical evidence to suggest, that winning has a positive influence on attendance (Tapp, 2004). However, the Cubs example shows that winning cannot fully explain attendance levels. If it could, then the Cubs would have far fewer people coming to home games at Wrigley Field. In a study of seasonal attendances at 152 minor league baseball teams, Branvold, Pan and Gabert (1997) found winning percentage alone was not a valid predictor of attendance. While investigating attendances at Australian Football League (AFL) games, Shaw and McDonald found that while there was a positive relationship between winning and attendance, the relationship is not as strong as some in the media might suggest (Shaw & McDonald, 2005).

There are, of course, other possible reasons for attending professional sports games including the fans' internal motivations such as entertainment value, excitement, social interaction and group affiliation. These tend to

focus on the cognitive (thinking) or hedonic (feeling) processes to achieve satisfaction with a choice. Although these and other factors have been moderately useful in explaining fan attendance at sports games, they have been poor predictors of future attendances.

What then might be a better predictor of attendance? For frequently purchased consumer goods in stable markets, the study of habit formation (past behaviour) has been effective in predicting future purchase rates and frequency (A. Ehrenberg et al., 1990) at an aggregate level. Similar analyses are performed in this study on sports attendance. Examining the past attendance of spectators may lead to insights that would help strengthen habitual attendance.

Another good predictor of attendance may be uncovered by investigating the rituals fans perform on game day. The concept of ritual ties in the behavioural, cognitive and affective dimensions of fan attendance. Fan rituals such as "tailgating" (arriving at a game early to socialise, eat and drink), painting one's face with team colours, making a sign or banner to bring along to the game, and singing the club fight song may strengthen the habit of attendance. Among other things, this study examines the role ritual plays in sports consumption, and discusses the possible role for ritual in general consumption.

Research Questions

The principal question directing this study is: ***how can marketers explain uncommon loyalty to a brand?***

To help answer this broad question, this study addresses seven issues:

1. Will measurement scales, designed for North American use, work on data collected from fans of professional Australian football?
2. Can the Negative Binomial Distribution predict future attendance as a function of past attendance (habit)?
3. Can sports fan rituals be measured, and if so, which are the important dimensions of ritual?
4. Do ritual activities prompt stronger behavioural loyalty (attendance)?
5. Do ritual activities prompt stronger attitudinal loyalty (commitment)?
6. Should managers of sports teams develop and facilitate ritualistic consumption?
7. What can managers of non-sport products learn from the game-day consumption of sports?

Academic and Managerial Contribution

To the author's knowledge, there is a gap in loyalty research, where researchers have not previously investigated the reasons that some products garner uncommon loyalty, while others do not. This study helps

fill the loyalty gap, and this exploratory work is important to establish the role ritual plays in consumption and loyalty. The scale developed for measuring fan ritual can be used in other sports marketing studies in other countries. The principles underlying the scale development help to generate modified ritual scales for investigating the ritual consumption of other consumer goods and services.

For practitioners, the insights from this study – should the hypotheses hold - will help team marketers to better understand the attendance behaviour of fans during both winning and losing seasons. Sports marketers face the unusual situation having little to no influence over the core product (on-field performance), and so need to carefully manage the marketing mix elements under their control. There is also an opportunity for marketers of non-sports products to learn from this study. For example, if marketers of fast moving consumer goods can engender even a little of the uncommon loyalty shown to sports teams, they will hold a strong competitive advantage over rival brands.

Chapter 2: Previous Research

Introduction

Since the focus of this study on uncommon loyalty uses the sports industry as its setting, and sports fans as the subjects, it makes sense to briefly consider just what is meant by the term 'fan' or 'fanatic'.

Fanaticism

The roots of fanaticism come from the study of religion, with the Latin fanaticus meaning 'of a temple, inspired by a god'. A fanatic is obsessed, devoted and loyal, regardless of whether this obsession is dysfunctional (Redden & Steiner, 2000). Fanaticism can be closed-mindedness (Mead, 1977) or a rigidity in humans that does not allow for changed conditions (Ben-Eliezer, 1977). Daly (1977) describes the distinguishing characteristics of fanatics as their simplified view of right and wrong, and their rigidly held view of social reality.

Milgram (1977) questions the pejorative use of the term fanatic, and asks how to distinguish between fanaticism and a commendable adherence to principle? Similarly, Ekman (1977) believes that every person has qualities that make them something of a fanatic, and so fanaticism is a matter of degree, and not a matter of kind.

While there is a negative connotation to the word fanatic (S. E. Bird, 1999; Jindra, 1994), the term fan does not always carry the negative stigma. The difference between a fan and a fanatic is that while both may be devoted to a given subject, the behaviour of the fanatic is seen as violating prevailing social norms, while the behaviour of a fan, although still considered unusual, will not violate those norms (Thorne & Bruner, 2006). For example, a fan might paint his face in team colours on game-day before attending the game, while a fanatic might paint his face in team colours every day.

From a marketing perspective, fans of consumer products exhibit heavy usage and purchase patterns (Hofman, 2000), participate in brand communities (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), provide strong affirmative word-of-mouth communications (Kozinets, 2001) and positively affect company profitability (Redden & Steiner, 2000). How do mere consumers become fans? How do mere spectators become devoted sports fans? Some researchers believe socialisation agents driven by identification (Chung, Farrelly, Beverland, & Quester, 2005) promote fan-like behaviour. Socialisation agents can include fan rituals, and may have the dual effect of not only creating fans, but also sustaining their devotion (Pimentel & Reynolds, 2004).

Sports fans are highly involved, and possess an emotional attachment to their team (Shank & Beasley, 1998). Although some gender differences exist in sport fan behaviour, one study found no significant difference with game attendance (Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End, & Jacquemotte, 2000).

Loyalty

> *"Loyalty is noble. It suggests that a person has conviction, trust and fidelity."* (Oliver, 1999, p.42)

The current economic status of professional sport has made it imperative to understand what factors contribute to loyalty. In the domain of sport consumer behaviour, the importance of loyalty for an organisation's financial health has directed efforts toward understanding how attitudinal differences among sport spectators and fans contribute to team loyalty (Funk & Pastore, 2000; Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2003; Mahony & Howard, 1998). A loyal, die hard fan is important for not only attendance, television ratings, and the purchase of licensed merchandise, but loyal consumers ideally transfer their allegiance to the goods and services promoted by corporate sponsors during sporting events (Burnett, Menon, & Smart, 1993; McDonald & Shaw, 2005; Sebastian & Bristow, 2000). For sports team loyalty, superior brand (team or player) performance is not a

pre-cursor to attitudinal loyalty as with other service industries (Oliver, 1999; K. Parker & Stuart, 1997). Loyal fans resist the temptation to switch to a 'more successful' team during a losing season, or adopt a new 'favourite' player when their current favourite is down on form. Hence, sport organizations can ill afford fluctuations in support and must continually develop and maintain a profitable fan base. The concept of loyalty has received extensive attention from marketing academics and practitioners since Melvin Copeland (1923) first defined specialty, convenience and shopping goods, and then differentiated between customer recognition, preference and insistence of these goods.

Researchers describe loyalty as both uni-dimensional, and multi-dimensional with two independent dimensions: behavioural and attitudinal (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996; Baloglu, 2002; Day, 1969; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Oliver, 1999; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). The definition of brand loyalty that enjoys widespread academic support (Mellens, Dekimpe, & Steenkamp, 1996) is provided by Jacoby and Chestnut:

> *"The (a) biased, (b) behavioural response, (c) expressed over time, (d) by some decision-making unit, (e) with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and (f) is a function of psychological (decision making evaluative) processes"* (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978, p. 165).

This definition highlights the importance of the attitudinal component in distinguishing true brand loyalty from simply repeat buying (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Mellens et al., 1996; Oliver, 1999). Repeat buying can take place for reasons other than brand loyalty, such as inertia, promotional spend or distribution intensity (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973; Mellens et al., 1996), and as such may contain spurious loyalty (Day, 1969).

Dick and Basu's (1994) widely used model of customer loyalty depicts this two-dimensional construct of attitudinal and behavioural components. They build on Day's (1969) conceptualisation of using both dimensions and propose the typology of loyalty in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Dick and Basu's Typology of Loyalty

		Repeat Patronage	
		High	Low
Relative Attitude	High	Loyalty	Latent Loyalty
	Low	Spurious Loyalty	No Loyalty

Dick and Basu use relative attitude as one of the measures of loyalty instead of favourable attitude as they contend that consumers can have a

favourable attitude to more than one brand, and it is the favourability *relative* to the other brand that is important. This relativity is less common when considering sporting brands however, as sports fans tend not to switch allegiances (K. Parker & Stuart, 1997), and tend not to be a fan of more than one team at a time (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001). Sports fans, in general, do not have two 'favourite' brands or teams, as there are few competitive substitutes in fans' choice sets (Kurlantzick, 1983). Certainly fans may have a favourite National League team and a favourite American League team (if we consider the case of Major League Baseball), but should these teams compete most fans would prefer the overall favourite team to win. Relative attitude has two dimensions; attitude strength and attitudinal differentiation, which increase the predictive ability of the overall loyalty model (Dick & Basu, 1994).

The four types of loyalty, according to Dick and Basu, are:

(i) No Loyalty - In a sports context, having a low relative attitude and low attendance behaviour depicts an absence of loyalty. Their attendance at games may be incidental; they may be accompanying other more loyal fans for social reasons, may be corporate guests with no affinity for a sporting team or simply may be responding to an invitation to attend. Low relative attitude (one of the dimensions of the 'no loyalty' segment) may also be due to low attitudinal

differentiation – where consumers see little difference between competing brands (Dick & Basu, 1994).

(ii) Spurious Loyalty - With consumer brands, spurious loyalty usually describes the state of inertia with low involvement goods where repeat buying takes place due to situational or social influences (Assael, 1992; Hoyer, 1984). Brand familiarity also plays a strong role with spuriously loyal customers. In the sports setting, geographical separation (Dick & Basu, 1994), or a consistently winning team (Gladden & Funk, 2001) may be the cause of a spuriously loyal fan. To analyse geographical separation as an example of spurious loyalty, consider a fan of the West Coast Eagles football team (which is based in Perth) who lives on the other side of the country in Brisbane. This fan may purchase tickets to Brisbane Lions games because she enjoys going to the football, or when her favourite team is in town. Her initial attitudinal loyalty to the Brisbane team may be quite low, yet she is a repeat buyer of the service.

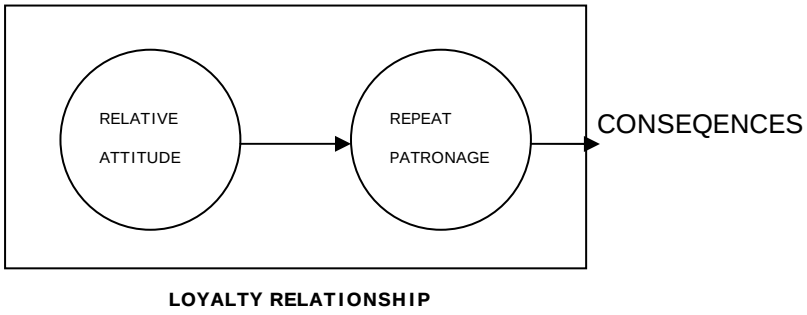
With a consistently winning team, the spuriously loyal consumer (high patronage, low relative attitude) may only continue their association with the team while they are winning, and reduce their

attendance when the team starts to lose. These fans are commonly known as 'fair-weather' fans, and this phenomenon highlights the importance of using behavioural and attitudinal measures of loyalty to distinguish among different types of fans (Gladden & Funk, 2001).

(iii) Latent Loyalty - Latent loyalty describes those consumers with high relative attitude and low repeat patronage, and can be a cause of concern for marketers of consumer goods. Situational influences such as low purchasing power may dictate the level of repeat purchase regardless of the level of attitude strength. In the sports context, latently loyal fans may not be able to afford to purchase tickets to a game, or may be locked out of attending due to stadium capacity constraints. In the United States for example, the Washington Redskins football team had a famously long waiting list for season tickets while they played in the relatively small RFK stadium in Washington DC. Regardless of how much you loved the Redskins, there were no season tickets available. This situation has changed somewhat since they moved to playing home games in a much larger stadium in Landover MD – some of their previously latent loyal fans can now become loyal.

(iv) Loyalty - For marketers, this is the most preferred of the four conditions (Dick & Basu, 1994). Apart from the obvious definitional consequences of loyalty - repeat purchase and positive relative attitude – loyal customers are more resistant to persuasion from other brands, less likely to search for more information, and more likely to provide positive word-of-mouth communication about the brand (Dick & Basu, 1994). Brand loyal customers may also be up to nine times as profitable as a disloyal one (Light, 1994), and six times cheaper to service than acquiring new customers (Rosenberg & Czepiel, 1984).

Figure 2: Dick and Basu's Framework for Customer Loyalty



Not all researchers are convinced, however, of the strong positive relationship between lifelong customers and profitability in all situations.

Dowling and Uncles (1997) caution marketers about generalising this relationship, and called for empirical testing. Reinartz and Kumar (2000) tested the relationship over a three year period with customers of a catalogue retailer. Their results suggest that in both contractual and non-contractual situations, there are cases where life-long customers do not yield higher profits than spurious customers. Further analysis discovered little evidence to suggest that retained customers are cheaper to serve or less price sensitive (Reinartz & Kumar, 2002). While Reinartz and Kumar favour dropping some unprofitable customers, regardless of the length of relationship, Reichheld and Sasser (1990) believe in a policy of zero defections.

Garland and Gendall (2004) criticise Dick and Basu for neither operationalising nor testing their theoretical concept. Although Garland and Gendall find evidence to support Dick and Basu's composite model in subscription (i.e. contract) markets, they conclude that attitude and behaviour should be tested separately. In addition, marketing academics have argued that a composite approach that includes both an attitudinal and behavioural measure does a poor job of predicting loyalty outcomes, and therefore is of limited value (Robert East, Gendall, Hammond, & Lomax, 2005). If the desired outcome is retention (e.g. behavioural loyalty), then the study should measure and test for retention. If the desired

outcome is commitment (e.g. attitudinal loyalty), then the study should measure and test for commitment, rather than an all encompassing loyalty construct.

In line with this perspective and previous sport marketing research (Funk & Pastore, 2000; Gladden & Funk, 2001), the current study decouples the construct of loyalty, and focuses on behavioural loyalty (repeat attendance) as the desired outcome. Decoupling the loyalty construct also enables using pure measures of loyalty that avoid the cross-loading of loyalty factors (Rundle-Thiele, 2005). For example, game day attendance is a pure measure of behavioural loyalty, but does not measure attitudinal loyalty. This approach provides the ability to utilize previous work on sport fan motivation, identification, commitment and attendance to examine how attitudinal and behavioural differences contribute to both loyalty dimensions separately.

This ongoing debate requires a closer look at the dimensions of loyalty. This literature review next examines the ways of measuring behavioural loyalty, shows the importance to sports marketers of attendance as a measure of behavioural loyalty and reveals the methods previous researchers have used to explain the variance in attendance at sporting events. Following this, the review focuses on the methods of defining and

measuring attitudinal loyalty, and highlights the links researchers have found between the measures of attitudinal loyalty and the desired behavioural outcome of game day attendance.

Behavioural Loyalty

At its basic level, behavioural loyalty is the observed repurchase of a brand from a number of competing brands (Robert East, 1997; A. S. C. Ehrenberg, 1988; Fader & Schmittlein, 1993). In their analysis of the antecedents of behavioural loyalty, Iwasaki and Havitz's model (1998) suggests measuring behavioural loyalty by investigating (among other factors) duration and frequency of behaviour. Duration is how long a person has been consuming a brand, and frequency is how often the brand is consumed over a specified period (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998).

Researchers distinguish another measure of behavioural loyalty, retention, from overall loyalty by contending retention has no psychological processes, it is solely a behavioural phenomenon (Robert East & Sinclair, 2000; Mellens et al., 1996). East and Sinclair (2000) argue that retention is a construct measured by the length of duration the customer stays with the brand, as distinct from loyalty which is behaviourally measured by share of category requirements and an attitudinal component. This is reinforced by Bass and Ehrenberg who argue that repeat purchase theory can explain

retention without reference to attitudinal aspects or marketers' actions (Bass, 1974; A. S. C. Ehrenberg, 1988).

Other suggested methods of calculating behavioural loyalty include sequence (purchase patterns), intensity of participation (how many hours per week) probability of purchase and proportion of purchase compared to other brands. However some of these measures may not fit sports teams (Pritchard, Havitz, & Howard, 1999). For example, professional sporting events are held at set times, so intensity of participation would have to be measured by means other than game day attendance such as television viewing or informational search. Also, proportion of purchase doesn't fit the sports context for two reasons. First, consumers attending a sports event are simultaneously 'forced' to consume a second brand – the other team that your favourite team is playing. Second, as considered earlier, sports consumers tend not to have two favourite brands (at least for the same sport) and so proportion of purchase for most sports consumers would be relatively high compared to other industries.

Repeat purchase, therefore, becomes a measure of behavioural loyalty important to sports marketers. Whereas fans can purchase many team related products, attendance drives much of a team's revenue. That is not to say, however, that other forms of behavioural loyalty are not important.

Certainly viewing games on television (as a form of behavioural loyalty) is also an important driver of revenue, but more so at a league level rather than a team (or brand) level. For example, in the AFL, revenue from the sale of television and internet rights flows to the team indirectly through the league. This makes attendance a better measure than television ratings because of the direct link between gate receipts and team revenue.

The Importance of Attendance

Understanding the factors that contribute to attendance at sporting venues is critical to sports marketers, and increasing attendance is a key objective of professional sports organisations (Hansen & Gauthier, 1989). Directly and indirectly, ticket sales (Burton & Cornilles, 1998) and attendance at sporting events generates as much as 75% of the overall revenue of some sports teams (Zhang, Smith, & Pease, 1996). For example, in Major League Baseball, the average fan will spend more on non-ticket items while at a game than the price of the ticket itself (Raymond, 2001). Increased attendances can also benefit home team performance (Varca, 1980).

Previously, many sports marketers viewed committed fans as the "most taken-for-granted" revenue source due to their loyalty (Mason, 1999). Now, however, due to increased competitive forces, marketers of sporting teams allocate resources towards investigating the factors that drive

attendance. In a qualitative study of National Basketball Association (NBA) marketing directors, Mawson and Coan (1994) found that promotional strategies worked differently for high, medium and low attendance teams, and therefore quantitative empirical research was needed. For example in the Mawson and Coan study, marketers of low attendance NBA franchises believed newspaper advertising was an effective promotional tool, significantly more than marketers of high attendance teams.

So what have sports researchers found regarding attendance? Most of the early research of attendance falls into two broad categories: peripheral and psychological (Kahle, Duncan, Dalakas, & Aiken, 2001).

The peripheral perspective looks at factors external to sports attendees such as the win-loss records of teams, stadium comfort and features, game-day weather, spectator income levels, the availability of entertainment substitutes and many more. Research linking these peripheral factors to attitudinal loyalty and attendance, however, shows conflicting results. For example, the relationship between spectator income levels and attendance is significant and positive for some sports such as cricket, significant and negative (suggesting an inferior good) for football in England, and

insignificant in some studies of American baseball (P. J. W. N. Bird, 1982; Demmert, 1973; Schofield, 1983; Siegfried & Eisenberg, 1980).

Peripheral Factors Affecting Attendance

The peripheral factors affecting attendance at sporting venues can be further classified as either production function, such as individual player skills and coaching style, or demand function variables such as ticket price, market size and availability of substitute entertainment (Schofield, 1983).

Production Function – Team Performance

Considerable research has investigated the effects of team performance on attendance, due to the abundance of quantitative data. The production factors linked to team performance are the individual skills of the players, the coaching style and effectiveness, and team management and administration. In a 1981 study, Greenstein and Marcum looked at 30 years of baseball attendance and win-loss data, and concluded that 25% of the variance associated with attendance was due to team performance. Other researchers found positive associations between winning teams and increased attendance, but they did not quantify the strength of the relationship (Jones, 1984; Medoff, 1976; Schofield, 1983; Whitney, 1988; Zhang, Pease, Hui, & Michaud, 1996).

The inability of winning percentage to fully explain attendance (Robertson & Pope, 1999) is highlighted by some teams that have suffered generational failure such as the St Kilda Saints, not having won a VFL/AFL championship since 1966, and the Chicago Cubs who have not won the World Series of baseball since 1908. Both of these teams maintain a base of members and attract relatively stable attendance at home games despite having losing records over many years.

There is also an inherent conflict between individual teams and leagues regarding team performance and attendance (Demmert, 1973). Whereas the league wants the outcome of individual games to be uncertain in order to maximise league attendance and thus revenue, individual teams seek to maximise their own revenue by winning as many games as possible (Jones, 1984). To maintain interest in the league, uncertainty of the game outcome must exist (Scully, 1995). In a study of American baseball, Kochman (1995) found that uncertainty of outcome is not a good predictor of attendance, which suggest that alternate strategies to promote attendance be investigated (Jones, 1984; Sutton & Parrett, 1992).

Demand Function – Consumer Demand

Almost all of the consumer demand factors associated with attendance studies fall into four broad categories: (i) demographic variables that cover population size, gender, age and ethnicity of market, (ii) game features such as closeness of the competition, star status of players, and special events, (iii) economic variables that include entrance price, income, substitutes and complements and (iv) individual preferences reflecting factors not already accounted for such as weather, quality of facility, time of day, week or season that a game is played (Greenstein & Marcum, 1981; Hansen & Gauthier, 1989; Schofield, 1983; Swanson, Gwinner, & Larson, 2001; Zhang, Pease et al., 1996; Zhang, Smith, Pease, & Jambor, 1997).

Population size has shown significant and positive relationships with attendance for both North American and non-North American sports (Medoff, 1976; Siegfried & Eisenberg, 1980). However, when aggregate league attendance is analysed (P. J. W. N. Bird, 1982), or if the league is highly concentrated in one city, population is not relevant (Drever & McDonald, 1981).

Regarding gender, Gantz and Wenner (1991) highlighted differences in the TV watching behaviour between men and women, noting that men were generally more involved in the broadcast and watched for longer, while

women used televised sports more as a social vehicle. Other studies focussing on gender found that females attend games more for social reasons than males (Pan, Gabert, & McGaugh, 1997), and no gender differences exist on the economic and group affiliation motivational factors (Wann, 1995). Again, the results are inconclusive.

Game features, or game attractiveness variables have also shown varied results. Closeness of competition (comparing competing teams' win-loss records) has not been widely tested and there is little evidence to indicate that teams that have similar win-loss records attract higher crowds (J. R. Hill, Madura, & Zuber, 1982). Team success, the star quality of individual players and special occasions or promotional days are all positive and significant factors related to attendance levels in American Major League Baseball (Baade & Tiehan, 1990; J. R. Hill et al., 1982; Siegfried & Eisenberg, 1980). However in Australian football, the association between the star quality of individual players and attendance is negative (Neale & Funk, 2006).

The link between economic variables and attendance is also tenuous. Income levels have been found to be significant and positive for some sports such as cricket, significant and negative (suggesting an inferior good) for soccer in England, and insignificant for American baseball (P. J.

W. N. Bird, 1982; Demmert, 1973; Schofield, 1983; Siegfried & Eisenberg, 1980). The existence of substitute forms of sports entertainment (including television coverage) has a significant negative impact on attendance (Demmert, 1973; J. R. Hill et al., 1982; Medoff, 1976; Schofield, 1983).

Adding to the confusion, the effect of changing ticket prices on attendance also shows mixed results. Most researchers conclude that demand for sporting tickets is price inelastic (Borland & Lye, 1992; Carmichael, Millington, & Simmons, 1999; Demmert, 1973; Dobson & Goddard, 1995; Hynds & Smith, 1994; Siegfried & Eisenberg, 1980), with elasticity ranging from -1.21 for members of English soccer clubs (Simmons, 1996) to -0.275 for attendees of American football (Welki & Zlatoper, 1994). Converse findings include two studies by Baimbridge, Cameron and Dawson who found price elasticities of +0.53 for English Rugby League (1995) and +1.10 for soccer (1996).

For individual preference variables, one study (P. J. W. N. Bird, 1982) found the influence of weather to be insignificant and others found it to be both positive (i.e. better weather conditions increased attendance) or negative (Drever & McDonald, 1981; Siegfried & Eisenberg, 1980). New stadia have a significant and positive relationship with attendance (Demmert, 1973; Greenstein & Marcum, 1981; J. R. Hill et al., 1982; Medoff, 1976), although

the length of time that determines how long a stadium stays "new" is undecided. Hill and Green (2000) found that fans' perceptions of the sportscape (stadium environment) was a good predictor of attendance at three Australian venues, but complicating the conclusions was that different elements of the sportscape were significant in each situation.

For game scheduling, weekend and end of season games increase attendance vis a vis afternoon games and games during the early to mid-part of the season (Drever & McDonald, 1981; J. R. Hill et al., 1982; Siegfried & Eisenberg, 1980). Richard and Allway (1993) found a combination of social influences, scheduling convenience, opponent importance and ease of parking to be predictors of basketball attendance.

The result, when taking all of these peripheral studies into account, is confusion. The conclusions are not generalisable, and researchers have not replicated the studies to be confident their results are valid, with some authors (e.g. Hansen & Gauthier, 1989) calling for replication and extension.

Perhaps it is due to the universality of sport that analysing demographic factors has proven mostly fruitless when attempting to explain or predict attendance. Researchers now recognise the importance of understanding

motives and social group dynamics (D. B. Holt, 1995; H. H. Kwon & Armstrong, 2004). To wit, sport marketing academic Galen Trail observes:

> *"The problem with the sports organizations and the marketers is that when they do their market research, they get stuck on the demographics. Demographics explain about 3 to 5 percent of your attendance. You can do all the demographic research in the world and you aren't learning diddly. It's the psychographic research that matters. That's what tells you why people are or aren't going to show up"* (Trail as quoted in King, 2004).

This is also emphasised by Florida State University researcher Jeffrey James:

> *'When you look at the connection people feel to the team, there's no difference based on demographics. I don't care if you make $20,000 a year or $200,000 a year, you can be an equally loyal fan"* (James as quoted in King, 2004).

Analysing sports attendance via the psychological perspective using measures of attitudinal loyalty holds more promise. So what is attitudinal loyalty, and how is it conceptualised and measured? Do measures of attitudinal loyalty explain variances in the important behavioural outcome of attendance? These are the factors investigated next.

Attitudinal Loyalty and the Psychological Factors Affecting Attendance

Rather than analysing factors external to the sports attendee such as weather and ticket prices, the psychological perspective uses internal factors such as satisfaction, motivation to attend, identification with the team and psychological commitment to investigate attendance. While sports marketers find the link between satisfaction and attendance tenuous, there is enough literature on satisfaction in other fields of marketing to warrant discussion here.

Satisfaction

In most service industries, researchers contend that satisfaction plays a role in determining re-purchase behaviour (Oliver, 1980). What role, if any, does satisfaction play in fans attending games? For example, is it important that fans are satisfied with the comfort of the stadium seats, or ticket refund policies, or even team performance? Oliver (1999) contends that while satisfaction and loyalty are linked, the relationship is asymmetric. While loyal customers are generally satisfied, satisfied customers are not always loyal.

The concept of Disconfirmation which measures performance against expectations, dominates satisfaction research. The basis of disconfirmation dates back to the mid-1960's and comes from Adaptation-Level Theory that compares actual level with reference levels of satisfaction (Helson, 1964). Satisfaction is:

> *"…a judgement that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under- or over-fulfilment."* (Oliver, 1997, p.13)

Under Disconfirmation Theory, customer satisfaction can be measured by comparing actual performance with expected performance (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Oliver & Bearden, 1983; Oliver & Westbrook, 1982; Tse & Wilton, 1988), or by comparing actual performance with an ideal or norm (Tse & Wilton, 1988). These expectations and evaluations of the performance are made across a number of different attributes (Oliva, Oliver, & MacMillan, 1992; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1993). These varied attributes have different levels of importance in the overall calculation of the level of satisfaction that customers experience with a service (Carmen, 1990). For example, using the Chicago Cubs again, the unofficial credo of Cubs fans is "Wait 'til next year!", (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001), a catchcry that implicitly lowers expectations of having a winning

record this year. If expectations are low, fans are less likely to be dissatisfied.

Satisfaction is either cumulative or transactional (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). Cumulative satisfaction concerns an overall evaluation of the service or good over time (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994), while transactional satisfaction is calculated on a specific transaction, usually the most recent (Oliver, 1993).

A meta-analysis of customer satisfaction by Szymanski and Henard (2001) found that of the predictor variables investigated, the constructs of Functional Value and Disconfirmation showed the strongest correlation with customer satisfaction. Regret is an additional construct to add to the satisfaction model. Regret (a comparison between chosen and forgone alternatives) is distinguished from satisfaction (disconfirmation) in situations where the opportunity cost of a decision is important (Tsiros & Mittal, 2000), i.e. how will a fan feel if they miss out on attending a game that subsequently acquires legendary status?

Advancing the work on the satisfaction of sports fans, Madrigal utilised a two stage sampling technique to collect data from U.S. college women's basketball games (Madrigal, 1995). His proposed model is in Figure 3.

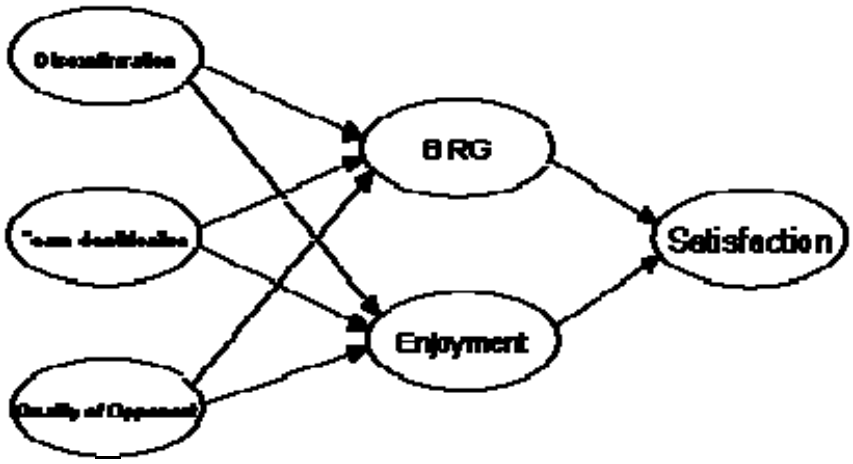
Madrigal found that team identification (and not satisfaction) had the most influence on basking in reflected glory (BIRGing) and enjoyment. BIRGing is manifested in the sports fan as being more likely to wear their favourite team merchandise after the team won than when it lost, and being more likely to refer to the team using 'we' when it won, and 'they' when the team lost (Cialdini et al., 1976). BIRGing is explored in more detail later in this study.

In Madrigal's study, expectancy disconfirmation was the next most influential antecedent and this study marked the first time the relationship between expectancy disconfirmation and BIRGing was empirically tested. For the links leading to fan satisfaction, enjoyment contributed the most to fan satisfaction. Given the home team won all four games during the data collection period, this result requires further examination (Madrigal, 1995). In addition, Madrigal did not test the association between satisfaction and future attendance or intention to attend.

However contrasting Madrigal's research, in a study of 667 football fans in England, including season ticket holders and lapsed season ticket holders, Tapp (2004) found that satisfaction had "little to no link" to attitudinal loyalty. In proposing a model of the overall sport service, Westerbeek and

Shilbury (2003) theorise measuring satisfaction along with value and service quality.

Figure 3: Madrigal's Model of Fan Satisfaction

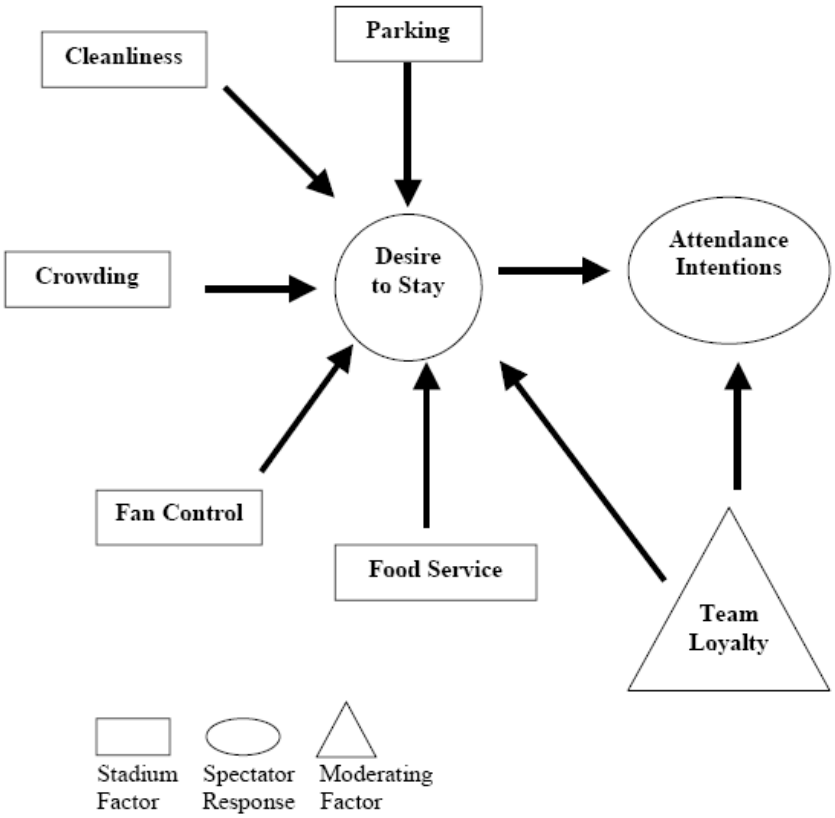


In a sports environment, the facility on which the game is played, forms an integral part of the servicescape (Bitner, 1992) and of service quality. Perceptions of the quality of the facility significantly influence satisfaction with the experience (K. L. Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994), and the likelihood of repeat attendance (K. Wakefield, Blodgett, & Sloan, 1996). To increase fan satisfaction, research has shown that newer, more comfortable stadia help attract larger audiences.

To test the influence of selected stadium factors on fan attendance, Wakefield and Sloan examined the following stadium attributes: parking,

cleanliness, crowding, food service, and fan control (K. Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). Their model is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Factors Affecting Attendance Intentions



Based on a sample of 1491 college football attendees at five different stadia in the US, their findings indicate that if stadium managers can positively control these stadium factors (comfortable seats, clean restrooms, adequate parking), fans will desire to stay longer at the game, and intend to return more often (K. Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). They found a composite measure

of team loyalty to be a moderating factor in both desire to stay and intention to attend.

If winning is not the only reason fans attend games, and satisfaction and demographics are not particularly useful in identifying and segmenting motivated fans, what other factors come into play? One of the areas researchers have examined more heavily in recent times is the motives of sports fans. What motivates fans to attend sporting events? Are fans of different sports motivated differently? What is motivation?

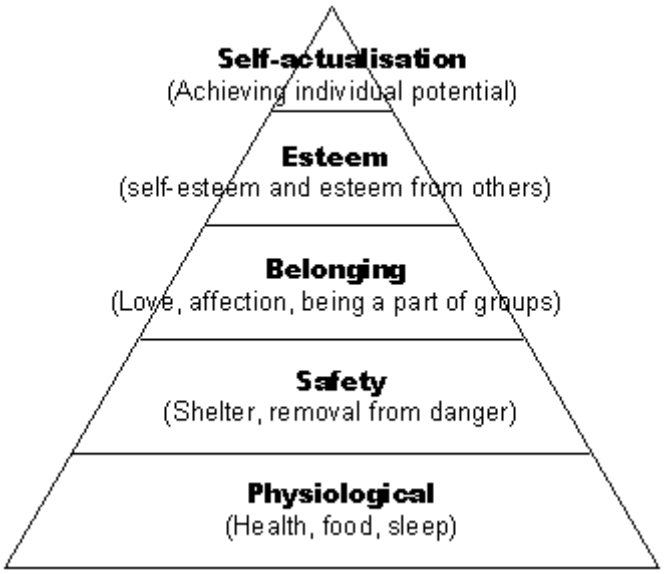
Motivation

Motivation is the "drives, urges, wishes or desires" that initiate behaviour (Bayton, 1958 p. 282). Consumers are driven by a state of tension that exists as a result of an unfulfilled need or want (Schiffman et al., 2001 p. 94). Motivational forces are the psychological factors described by Kahle et al. (2001) in their study on the gender differences of basketball fans.

In his well known theory of human motivation, Abraham Maslow (1970) described how different levels of needs are satisfied by consumer goods and services. His 'Hierarchy of Needs' model theorised that consumers fill lower level needs first, and then move upwards to fill higher level needs. The driving force of human behaviour is the lowest level of need that is

largely unfulfilled. This recognises that no need is ever completely satisfied (Schiffman et al., 2001). Figure 5 presents Maslow's hierarchy (Anonymous, 2005).

Figure 5: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Some critics of the hierarchy conclude that not all consumers behave in this structured way. Some consumers, such as young adults for example, may focus more on self-actualisation needs than perhaps mature adults (Kahle as cited in Mowen & Minor, 1998 p. 166).

In the Theory of Learned Needs, McClelland (1986) identifies three secondary needs (needs that are learned and not instinctual) that motivate people:

1. Need for achievement – people who want to reach goals and strive for success.
2. Need for power – the need to control one's environment, and exercise control over others.
3. Need for affiliation – people who want others' approval.

McClelland's third need resembles Maslow's "social need" or need for belongingness. It is this learned need that sports researchers have pursued to find the motivates for group identification (in this case the sports team) and game day attendance.

Sports Fan Motivation

As shown earlier with the overall loyalty construct, it is important to distinguish between those consumers who repeatedly purchase a brand and exhibit behavioural loyalty, and those whom have a strong relative attitude towards the brand and exhibit attitudinal loyalty. A similar distinction is important in the study of motivation. Research on the factors that motivate consumers to watch and attend sport must discriminate between those attendees who merely enjoy watching an event, and those for which sport plays an important part in their life (Trail & James, 2001). Spectators of sport can then be classified along a continuum that ranges from highly motivated fans, to mere observers (Sloan, 1989), a distinction that is important as spectators may be motivated differently than fans

(Robinson, Trail, Dick, & Gillentine, 2005). For example, a *spectator* may be motivated to attend for the game's entertainment value, while a *fan* may be motivated by the vicarious achievement associated with their team winning. Deciphering the motivations that bring people back to games is crucial to the sports industry and marketing researchers (King, 2004; H. Kwon & Trail, 2003; Swanson, Gwinner, Larson, & Janda, 2003; Wann, 1995).

As a hypothetical construct, motivation is somewhat intangible. While the measurement and identification of motives is inexact, sports researchers have taken great steps forward in recent years towards validating a reliable scale for measuring sports fan motivations. Perhaps the first attempt to generate such a scale was Daniel Wann (1995) who created the Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS). The SFMS served as an important starting point. There were eight motivational factors in the original SFMS:

1. Eustress – the pleasurable combination of euphoria and stress a fan feels during a game.
2. Self-esteem – a vicarious achievement of feeling a winner when the team wins.
3. Escape – forgetting about your 'boring' life through sport fandom.
4. Entertainment – viewing sport as a form of entertainment and a substitute for movies, theatre, arts etc.

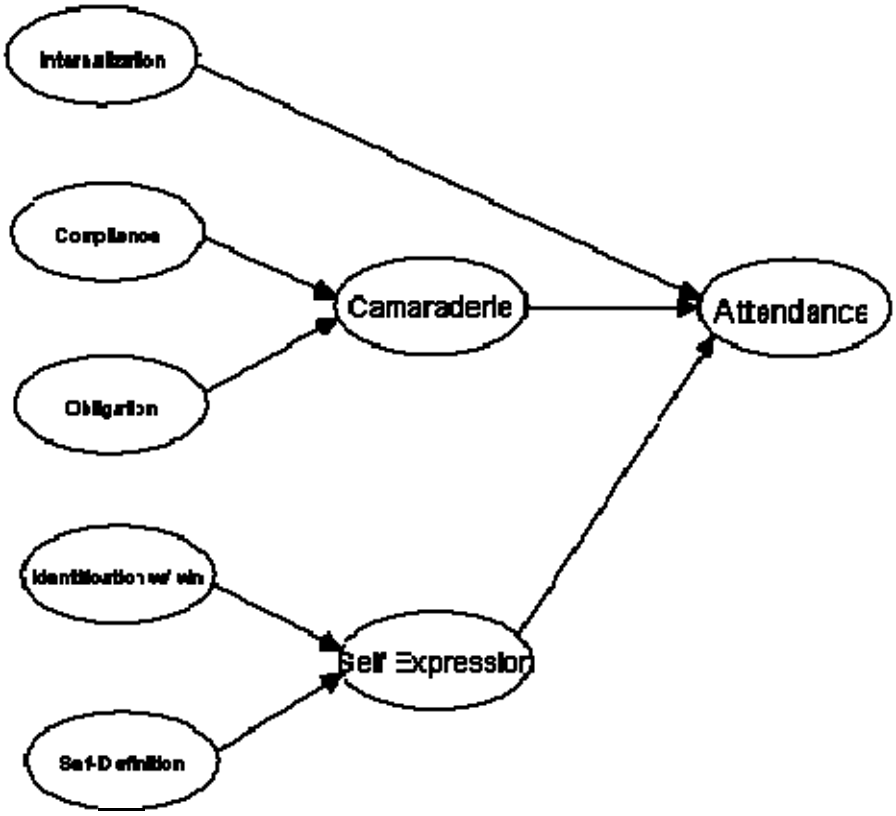
5. Economics – gambling opportunities presented by watching sports
6. Aesthetics – the attractiveness of the beauty and grace of the sport.
7. Group Affiliation – a fan's desire to be with other people sharing some common values.
8. Family – spending time with one's own family.

Wann used a sample of college students to find that male fans tend to have higher levels of eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, and aesthetic motivation, while female fans were motivated by the opportunity to spend time bonding with family members (Wann, 1995). To expand and validate the SFMS, Wann, Schrader and Wilson (1999) conducted further studies. They examined the factor structure of the SFMS using a diverse sample generated via telephone interviews. The researchers confirmed the validity and reliability of the factor structure.

Combining the 1995 and 1999 studies, Wann et al. (1999) concluded that age had little relation to sport fan motivation, thus confirming that demographics play only a small role in segmenting sports fans. Also, the researchers noted that the respondents motivated by eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, aesthetic, or group affiliation, considered themselves to be sports *fans*. Respondents motivated by economic or family factors did not consider themselves as sports fans, rather *spectators* (Wann et al., 1999).

Furthering sports motivation research, Kahle, Kambara and Rose (1996) built a model of fan attendance motivations (see Figure 6) using Kelman's (1958) functional theory of attitudinal motivation as a base.

Figure 6: Functional Model of Fan Attendance Motivations



In their model, the motivation of sports fans to attend games came primarily from a desire to achieve group affiliation (camaraderie), a self-expressive experience and an overall love of the sport (internalization). Of these, internalization was the strongest explainer of attendance (Kahle et al., 1996). These researchers also concluded that the fair-weather fans in the

crowd are likely to be those who attend primarily for an exciting self-defining experience, and are prone to be brand switchers. Using path analysis, Kahle et al claim their model explains 30% of the variance in attendance (Kahle et al., 1996).

Trail and James (2001) continued refining the motivation scale by developing the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC), which contained nine factors that influenced spectator behaviour. Their nine factors were: achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, drama/eustress, escape, family, physical attractiveness of participants, quality of the physical skill and social interaction. Distinct from the previous sports motivation studies, the sample used to administer the MSSC came from season ticket holders of a US major league baseball team, and not from the general or student population (Trail & James, 2001). The MSSC had sound psychometric properties (Funk et al., 2003), but the authors did not test the relationship between motivation and game day attendance. The Cronbach Alpha reliabilities and average variance explained for the MSSC are listed below:

Table 1: Statistics for the MSSC

	α	AVE
Achievement	0.89	0.74
Knowledge	0.80	0.59
Aesthetics	0.88	0.72
Drama	0.80	0.58
Escape	0.72	0.51
Family	0.68	0.48
Physical Attraction	0.78	0.69
Physical Skills	0.75	0.53
Social	0.78	0.54

Based upon a review of the literature, and upon these previous studies, the Sports Interest Inventory (SII) was developed to measure and analyse the hypothesized motivators of football attendance at the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup in the United States (Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa, & Hirakawa, 2001). Over 1300 spectators provided a large sample that confirmed the SII as a valid and reliable scale with which to measure attendee motivations. Through the addition of contextual factors (Funk et al., 2003) such as gender specific motivations, the SII is also flexible enough to be used on both men's and women's professional team sports, in many different countries.

Figure 7 lists the construct descriptions used to examine the relationships between the 33 observed variables and 11 first order latent variables: *Player*

Interest, *Friends Bonding*, *Socialization*, *Drama*, *Team Interest*, *Role Model*, *Family Bonding*, *Excitement*, *Entertainment Value*, *Vicarious Achievement*, and *Escape*.

Figure 7: Description of Sport Interest Inventory (SII) and Reliabilities

Construct	Description	α
Family Bonding	Opportunity to spend quality time with family	0.92
Friends Bonding	Opportunity to spend quality time with friends	0.83
Drama	Close game versus a one-sided game with the element of uncertainty as to the outcome of the game	0.79
Entertainment	Affordability of the entertainment	0.92
Escape	A desire to "get away" or be a part of something different from the "normal routine"	0.93
Excitement	Excitement surrounding the games and spectacle	0.90
Player Interest	Watch and follow a specific favourite player	0.79
Role Model	Players serve as positive role models for young children	0.93
Socialization	Opportunity to interact with other spectators and fans	0.85
Team Interest	Interest in the team as a whole rather than individual players	0.88
Vicarious Achievement	Team provides a heightened sense of personal or collective esteem	0.92

Source: (Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2004)

The issue facing researchers is that while motivation does a good job explaining attitudes, it generally does a poor job explaining behavioural

outcomes such as attendance (Neale & Funk, 2006). If behavioural outcomes are important, then what better explains variances in behaviour? Concurrent with the growing numbers of sports fan motivation studies is the increasing use of *fan identification* with the team to predict desirable marketing outcomes.

Identification

Identity theory states that an individual's self concept has a personal identity and a social identity. Personal identity comprises characteristics such as abilities and interests. Social identity stems from how a person sees themselves fitting in with significant and relevant groups such as social groups, club memberships (such as sporting teams) and employment situations. In developing a theory to explain identification with an employer, Ashforth and Mael (1989) describe Organizational Identification (OID) as "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to" an employing company and where the individual uses membership in this group to define themselves. Group prestige then, becomes an important predictor of identification (Lipponen, Helkama, Olkkonen, & Juslin, 2005).

Identification theory also explains that an individual experiences the successes and failures of the group vicariously (Kagan, 1958). Group identification can motivate individuals to define themselves and maintain

this definition through group-derived behaviours (Freud, 1949). However, most company-consumer relationships are not as formalised as employer-employee relationships (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Employees are required and often contracted to be present and productive in the workplace regardless of their feelings towards the organisation. Employers expect their employees to behave in a certain way while in the workplace, and frequently provide employees with behavioural guidelines. While in the employer-employee relationship behaviour is constrained and mandated, much greater behavioural freedom exists for the customer in a customer-company relationship.

As a result of these differences, researchers have modified OID or used other measures of identification to investigate the relationship between customers and not-for-profit organisations (Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995), universities (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) and sporting teams (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Madrigal, 2001; Matsuoka, Chelladurai, & Harada, 2003; Sutton, McDonald, Milne, & Cimperman, 1997; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005; Wann & Pierce, 2003). All found positive and significant relationships between identification and desired behavioural outcomes.

For example, in an empirical study of art museum members, Bhattacharya , Rao and Glynn (1995) found identification with the museum is positively

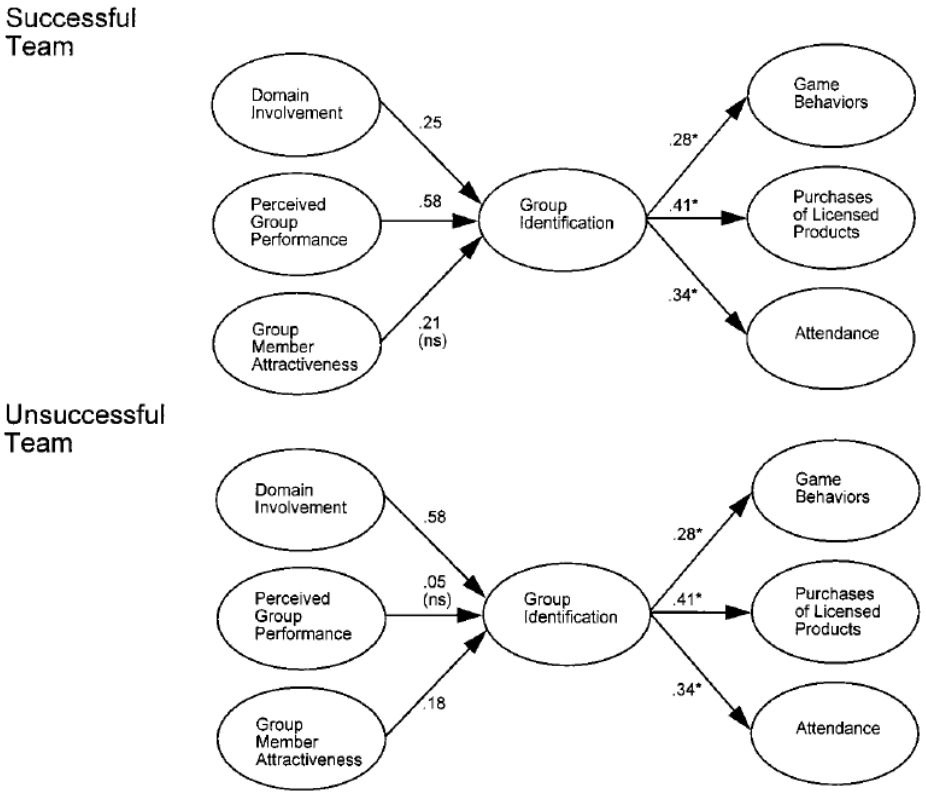
related to the prestige of the museum, along with the frequency of visit and length of membership. Sutton et al's (1997) study found highly identified fans of sports teams were less sensitive to ticket price increases. Branscombe and Wann (1991) found positive social and psychological outcomes of identification, and Gladden and Funk (2002) found identification to be a strong predictor of brand (team) benefits. Madrigal (2001) investigated the effect of identification on sponsorship and ticket purchase intentions, and found highly identified fans are more likely to have a positive attitude towards team sponsors, and identification moderates the effect of attitude on purchase intentions.

So, what does it mean to be a highly identified fan? Identified fans consider being a fan of their team as an important part of their life, and they communicate this importance to family and friends. Identified fans feel like a winner when their team wins, and they a willing to publicly defend their team from criticism. Identified fans proudly wear team merchandise, logos and emblems regardless of whether their team wins or loses.

Regarding the link between identification and attendance, both Fisher and Wakefield (1998) and Schurr, Wittig, Ruble and Ellen (1988) found a significant and positive relationship between highly identified fans, and

attendance. Fisher and Wakefield studied fans of two minor league hockey teams in the same city – one with a winning record (above .500), and one with a losing record. The study showed that winning was only important in forming group identification to fans of the successful team as depicted in the path analysis in Figure 8 (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998).

Figure 8: Factors Leading to Group Identification



While the path from identification to attendance (standardised regression weight 0.34) was the same for both teams, indicating a positive relationship, Fisher and Wakefield did not report how much of the variance in attendance was explained by identification.

Researchers have also tested the relationship between identification and behavioural *intentions* or conative loyalty. In a study of 1256 spectators of Japan's J-League football, Matsuoka, Chelladurai and Harada (2003) regressed identification and satisfaction measures with attendance intentions, and found fan identification was a better predictor than satisfaction with game outcome or satisfaction with team performance. These authors report the combination of satisfaction with team performance and identification explained 26.5% of the variance in attendance intentions – but not attendance behaviour.

Trail, Anderson and Fink (2005) used 1276 fans of both men's and women's college sports to support a model of conative loyalty using the intertwining relationships of disconfirmation, mood, self esteem and identification. While their model explained an impressive 49% of the variance in conative loyalty, their conative loyalty construct could include both behaviours and attitudes. They define conative loyalty as behavioural intentions, but according to their scale items used to measure conative loyalty, the behaviour could be attendance, team merchandise purchase or to generically "support" the team.

Wann, Bayens and Driver (2004) investigated the effects of ticket scarcity and identification on attendance intentions. While they found that ticket

scarcity had a positive influence on intention to attend, a secondary outcome was the finding that highly identified fans were more likely to attend games than lowly identified fans. These authors did not report the amount of variance in attendance intentions explained by ticket scarcity and identification. Unlike consuming the services of a physician in a one-on-one situation, for example, sports fans consume in groups, and so the group may also influence fan behaviour.

Group Identification

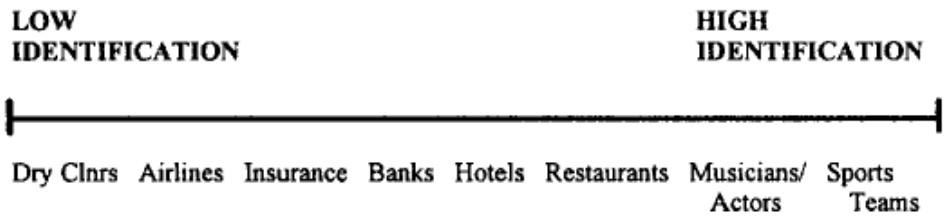
Tajfel (1982 p. 24) describes social identity as "that *part* of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership". Basically, people define themselves, in part, from the groups to which they belong, and how important the group membership is. Group identification fulfils a consumer's need to affiliate with something or someone desirable or successful (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Sutton et al., 1997).

Because sometimes individuals consume services in groups, social identity connects the emotional relationship of an individual with a service brand with a view to building brand equity (Underwood, Bond, & Baer, 2001). The more important an individuals' tie with the group is the more

important the connection with the brand. Relationship identity also describes how much the consumer views the relationship as a team effort and sees the service provider in proprietary terms as belonging to them (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997; Stanley & Markman, 1992). Such consumers would use the term 'my team' if they had high levels of relationship identity. Consumers maintain relationships with service providers due to constraints (they "have to" continue in the relationship) or dedication (they "want to" stay in the relationship) (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997).

High levels of emotional involvement (Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005), dedication and commitment characterise the typical sports fan (Sutton et al., 1997), and sports anchors the high identification end of the services identification continuum shown in Figure 9 (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2000; Underwood et al., 2001).

Figure 9: Services Identification Continuum



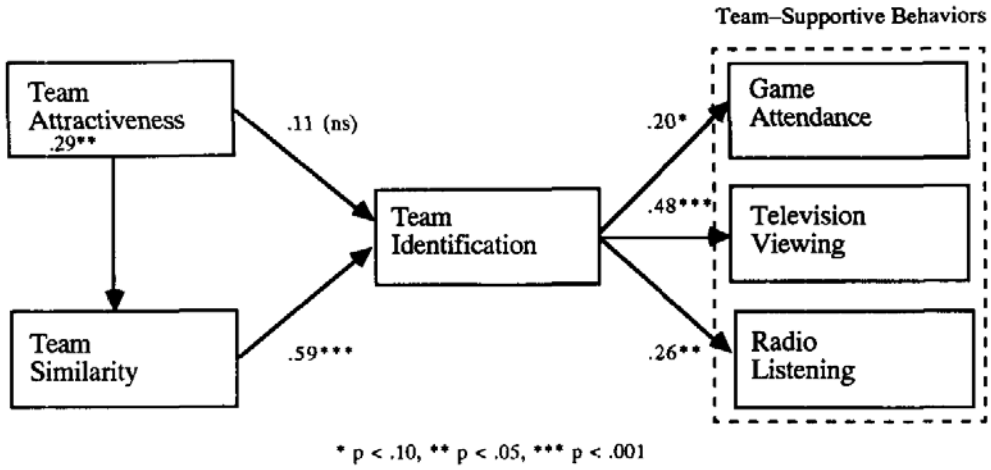
Group/team identification theory has been used to explain the phenomenon of losing teams attracting crowds over time (Fisher &

Wakefield, 1998), and of decreased sensitivity to ticket price increases (Sutton et al., 1997). The individual experiences the successes and failures of the group vicariously (Kagan, 1958).

Group identification also motivates individuals to define themselves and maintain this definition through group-derived behaviours (Freud, 1949) such as game day attendance (Matsuoka et al., 2003). Indeed, fans and mere spectators are distinguished based on group identification. Sports fans view themselves as members of a group, where an alliance is formed with other fans of the same team. For spectators, no such alliance exists (Zillman & Paulus, 1993). Sport fans can even hold strong psychological connections to a new team before the team begins playing (James, Kolbe, & Trail, 2002), as is the case with the expansion Colorado Rockies baseball team for example.

In a (1998) study on identification, Fisher found that an individual's perceived similarity with the group (and not group attractiveness as previously found) is the most important factor leading to identification. The results of their study are shown in Figure 10. Although Fisher found a significant and positive relationship between identification and attendance, his model only explained 4% of the variance in attendance.

Figure 10: Similarity and Attractiveness Effects on Identification with a Favorite Sports Team



Laverie and Arnett (2000) collected data from 190 college students in the United States. Their findings suggest identity salience (the importance of identity) is a stronger predictor of attendance at basketball games than satisfaction. Their study explained 22% of the variance in past game attendance.

Pioneering work by Cialdini at Arizona State University and researchers at five other universities explored the phenomenon of students being more likely to wear their football team merchandise on Mondays after the football team won than when it lost. Not only did the researchers find this was true at all six universities, but that students were more likely to refer to the team using 'we' when it won, and 'they' when the team lost (Cialdini et al., 1976). This behaviour, as described earlier, is 'basking in reflected

glory' (BIRGing) or 'cutting off reflected failure' (CORFing). BIRGing and CORFing behaviour, in terms of seeking private contact with teams after games, was confirmed in a 2002 study of 586 Dutch football fans (Boen, Vanbeselaere, & Feys, 2002).

In another study, Wann and Branscombe found that highly identified fans were more likely to BIRG and less likely to CORF (Wann & Branscombe, 1990). The opposite is true for fans that are not highly identified. Highly identified fans follow a self-serving bias (Miller & Ross, 1975) by internalising team successes (attributing the win to hard work or skill), while externalising losses by blaming bad luck, or poor umpiring in an attempt to maintain their positive social identity (Wann & Dolan, 2001).

As most sports teams would have certain proportions of both highly and lowly identified fans, long term losing would tend to see the lowly identified (a.k.a. "fair-weather") fans decrease their attendance, and highly identified (a.k.a. "die-hard") fans would largely maintain their attendance (Wann & Branscombe, 1990). These findings go some way towards explaining the ability of losing teams to retain certain basic attendance levels, almost regardless of winning percentage.

To summarise, identification with the team seems to be a reasonable predictor of desirable sport consumption outcomes (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002) such as game attendance, and explains attendance better than other constructs such as satisfaction and motivation. However there is still room for improvement.

Fisher and Wakefield (1998 p. 29) write "A key aspect of identification is that individuals are motivated to establish and maintain their ties to the group through their *behaviors*" (italics added). Yet most identification scales do not measure behaviour, they measure cognition. Mael and Ashforth (1992) refer to identification as a cognitive construct, and distinguish identification from other related constructs such as commitment.

Commitment

Commitment is similar conceptually to trust and identification, and is necessary for the type of long-term relationships that sports marketers would aspire to have with their fans (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Researchers describe commitment as a construct that represents the attitudinal component of loyalty better than previous measures such as preference, involvement or attachment (Crosby & Taylor, 1983; Day, 1969; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Pritchard, Howard, & Havitz, 1992).

The construct of commitment is usually considered in cognitive terms and is defined as the "emotional or psychological attachment to a brand" (Beatty & Kahle, 1988), along with the long-term desire to continue this attachment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In a follow-up to their previous study, Pritchard, Havitz and Howard (1999) surveyed 681 consumers of travel related services (hotels and airlines) across two samples. They developed a scale to measure commitment and found enduring desire or "resistance to change" was a significant component to commitment and a precursor to attitudinal loyalty.

Like the overall loyalty construct, researchers describe commitment both uni-dimensionally and multi-dimensionally. Gundlach et. al. (1995) contend the three dimensions of commitment are instrumental, attitudinal and temporal, which is conceptually similar to Allen and Meyer's (1990) normative, affective and continuance dimensions of organisational commitment.

Murrell and Dietz (1992) examined the differences among individuals in their level of support towards a US college football team. They found that the level of attitudinal support shown by the students was not affected by whether they attended games (Murrell & Dietz, 1992), and thus are

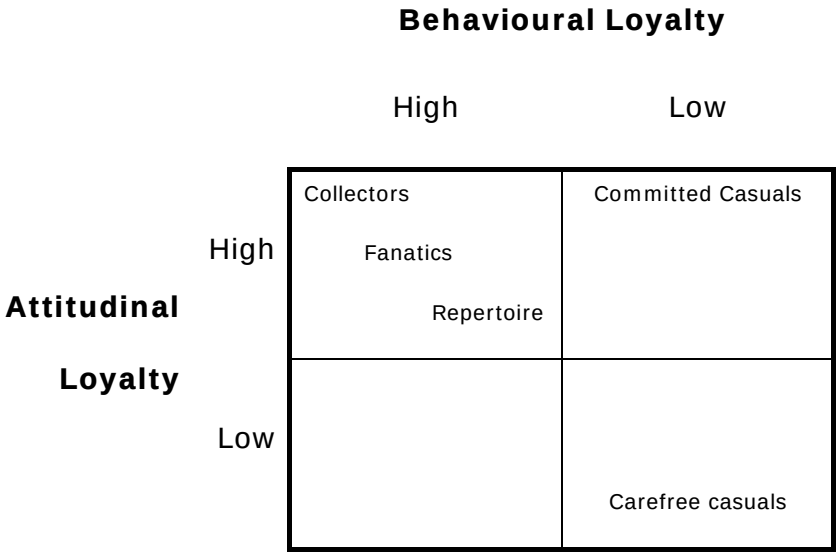
separate components of loyalty. Therefore, capturing attitudinal loyalty is critical when measuring overall brand loyalty.

Mahoney, Madrigal and Howard (2000) built on Pritchard et al's (1999) work on the commitment-loyalty link for services to create the Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) scale specifically for sport consumption. They collected four convenience data samples (N1 = 100 α = n/a, N2 = 151 α = 0.88, N3 = 157 α = 0.88 and N4 = 76 α = 0.94), and used Churchill's (1979) marketing scale development methodology to validate the PCT scale and assess its reliability. They found the PCT scale to be reliable and valid, and were able to segment the consumers into Dick and Basu's (1994) four dimensions of loyalty; true, spurious, latent and low loyalty.

Tapp, in his 2004 study of football attendees also segmented the fans according to the Dick and Basu framework, along with segments found from a previous Tapp and Clowes (2002) study. Tapp and Clowes used a mixture of qualitative and survey research and found that complex sub-groups emerged even within typologies. For example, even within the high behavioural, high attitudinal loyalty quadrant, differences surfaced depending on whether a fan identified with football - repertoire fans, rather

than a specific club – fanatics (Tapp & Clowes, 2002). This framework is shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Dick and Basu Framework Applied to Football Supporters by Tapp and Clowes.



One of the follow-on effects of Mahony et al's PCT scale is the ability to segment fans, and then explain attendance levels based on the proportion of true, spurious, latent and low loyalty fans in the team fan base. Previous attempts to combine the attitudinal and behavioural components of loyalty into one loyalty composite suggests a relationship between attitude and behaviour (Kraus, 1995). The level of commitment should be a good indicator of team related behaviour (Fazio, 1995; Petty, Haugtvedt, & Smith, 1995) such as watching on television or attending games.

Are Identification and Commitment the Same Thing?

Some researchers use the terms identification and commitment interchangeably (Benkhoff, 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Ouwerkerk, Ellemers, & de Gilder, 1999; Wallace, 1993; Wann & Pierce, 2003), and include identification in the definition of commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Other researchers have incorporated identification items in their commitment scales, or commitment items in their identification scales (Buchanan, 1974; Elsbach, 1999; Mottola, Bachman, Gaertner, & Dovidio, 1997).

In a comprehensive meta-analysis of identification, Riketta shows commitment and identification appear to be empirically distinct constructs in an organisational setting (Riketta, 2005), but would this also be the case with a company-customer or a team-fan relationship? Certainly identification can exist without a formal relationship (Pratt, 1998; Scott & Lane, 2000), but most research concerning identification has focused on the employer-employee relationship (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994).

Using an organisational setting is helpful to conceptually distinguish between commitment and identification. In an organisation, there is a formal and interdependent relationship between employer and employee. Employers need employees to create value for the organisation, and

employees need employers to share that value with them in the form of remuneration. Conceptually then, an employee may be committed to their organization without necessarily identifying with it (Harris & Cameron, 2005), in much the same way as Bendapudi and Berry (1997) describe the different motivations of maintaining a relationship with a service provider as constrained or dedicated.

For example an employee might be committed if they turn up to work every day, stay with their employer a long time and not even contemplate leaving. However this high commitment may be due to the employee's personal career goals (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), high levels of debt, their unsuitability for other workplaces, or their need for the health insurance benefits that come with their present employer. If these are the reasons for their commitment, they may not be highly identified with the organisation. Identified employees link the organisation to their self-concept and take pride in belonging to the company. Highly identified employees would also defend their organisation from criticism (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Riketta's (2005) analysis supports this distinction and concludes that employees can be committed to their organisation without being identified.

The relationship between a fan and their team, however, is different. First, fans (in the form of membership dues) pay the team to have a closer

relationship, not the other way around. Second, there is no formal contract that requires a fan to attend every home game, whereas employees frequently work under contracted conditions. Third, going back to the basics of consumer behaviour, fans do not *need* the team as an employee needs their employer. Fans *want* to be associated with their team.

Summary of Psychological Constructs

This review of the psychological constructs of satisfaction, motivation, identification and commitment leads to a preliminary conclusion, and many questions. Compared to satisfaction and motivation, identification and commitment better explain attendance – the outcome important to sports marketers. What then is the difference, if any, between identification and commitment? Which construct is the better measure of attitudinal loyalty, and which does a better job of explaining attendance? Do they mean the same thing in the sports industry?

So far, this literature review has covered the peripheral and psychological factors used by researchers to explain and predict sporting attendance. Another important area to consider is that of past behaviour and its influence on future behaviour. The frequency of past behaviour is habit, and is covered next.

Behaviour and Habit

The principal research methods used to investigate customer satisfaction, loyalty and motivation are based on intentions or self-reported behaviour. However, the validity of introspection on cognitive or affective processes, or behavioural intentions is widely questioned and consumers may be unable to report accurately about them (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Also, merely by measuring purchase intentions, researchers increase the likelihood of re-purchase, and decrease the time until the first repeat purchase takes place (Chandon, Morwitz, & Reinartz, 2004). Behavioural research that empirically tests past behaviour as opposed to cognitive processes or intentions has demonstrated that past behaviour accounts for a significant variation in subsequent behaviour (Bentler & Speckart, 1979).

When attitudes were used to predict behaviour, habit was found to improve behavioural prediction (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Petty, Unnava, & Strathman, 1991; Triandis, 1977). Habit in the consumer behaviour context is viewed as behavioural tendencies to repeat responses given a stable supporting context (Ouellette & Wood, 1998), and has been used interchangeably with the frequency of past behaviour (Knight, 1999). These habitual responses are said to have an element of automaticity, in that the response takes place with less focal attention than would normally be required for non-habitual behaviour (Triandis, 1980). Researchers have

included habit with intention as joint predictors of future behaviour (Ouellette & Wood, 1998; Triandis, 1977, , 1980).

Psychologists' early research defined habit as a basic unit of behaviour (G. Allport, 1985), but this was later redefined by behaviourists as a conditioned response that retained the concept of habit as a force driving behaviour (F. H. Allport, 1924; E. B. Holt, 1915; J. B. Watson, 1919). In the mid-1950's the cognitive approach to intentions through information processing gained support and left the behavioural approach out of favour (Abelson, 1994; G. Allport, 1985; Smith, 1994).

Negative Binomial Distribution Theory

The Negative Binomial Distribution (NBD) Theory uses market penetration, purchase frequency and time-period data to predict repeat purchase and brand choice patterns (A. S. C. Ehrenberg, 1988). The NBD is a behaviourally based model in that it does not require attitudinal or other marketing variables to calculate predicted repeat purchase rates, or the pattern of amount consumed. The managerial implications of the NBD are powerful. With only market penetration and purchase frequency in a time period, managers can predict future buying patterns (Frisbie, 1980) and therefore a measure of behavioural loyalty for a population (Bennett, 2004).

Requisite conditions for best use of the NBD (Robert East, 1997; Morrison & Schmittlein, 1988; Wagner & Taudes, 1987) are:

- The market is stable and mature
- Average repurchase frequency is greater than once per year
- Repeat purchase rates are Poisson distributed

The Dirichlet model (Goodhardt, Ehrenberg, & Chatfield, 1984), based on the NBD, applies where consumers purchase multiple brands from the chosen set. Sports team fanaticism generally prevents this consumption of multiple brands except in situations where consumers are motivated by enjoyment of the sport rather than a particular team, or incidental purchase due to a favourite team having to play another team to provide the core sport service.

The NBD and the Dirichlet models have been applied, with varying levels of success, to fast food outlets (Bennett, 2004), grocery stores (Frisbie, 1980), subscription markets (Sharp, Wright, & Goodhardt, 2002), retail shopping (Brewis-Levie & Harris, 2000; Robert East, P., Wilson, & Lomax, 1995) online gambling (Jolley, Mizerski, & Olaru, 2006), lotteries (Mizerski, Miller, Mizerski, & Lam, 2004), financial markets, petrol stations and dry cleaning stores, but not with sporting attendance.

In one of the few studies segmenting sports fans based on behaviour, Clowes and Tapp (2003) collected data from 667 fans at an English Premier League football game. Their results suggested that the attendance patterns of fans exhibited an "hourglass" shape, with high percentages of heavy and light attendees, and a low percentage of medium attendees. This hourglass distribution represents season ticket holders, who comprise the majority of heavy attendees, and casual fans who only attend one or two games per year. Researchers continue to debate whether this hourglass shape is desirable (Clowes & Tapp, 2003; Mullin et al., 2000). If each game is sold out, is it better to have higher proportions of heavy attendees (meaning fewer unique spectators at subsequent games), or higher proportions of light users, thereby a wider fan base with more individuals getting in to games?

This brief glimpse into habitual behaviour leads to some questions: Does attendance at sporting events follow the habitual pattern offered by the NBD? Can the inclusion of past behaviour add to the explanatory or predictive powers of commitment and identification with attendance? Certainly there are behavioural *outcomes* of identification and commitment such as retained employees, and attendance at sporting events, but is there a behavioural *dimension*? Earlier in this literature review, East et al (2005) found that separating the behavioural and attitudinal dimensions of loyalty

provided better predictions for the outcomes of loyalty. For example, instead of trying to measure an overall loyalty construct, researchers should choose behavioural loyalty, and measure its strength by examining customer retention. Perhaps the same may be true for identification/commitment? There may be an attitudinal dimension (already measured in existing scales), and a behavioural dimension (not yet measured).

What then might comprise the behavioural dimension of identification/commitment? How do humans *behave* so as to integrate themselves into clubs, groups or communities? For centuries, anthropologists and sociologists have studied ritual behaviour among humans and animals. So what is ritual behaviour, and how may it apply to sports and uncommon loyalty?

Ritual

> "*Rituals reveal values at the deepest level…*"
> (Wilson, 1954)

The roots of rituals lie in religion, yet rituals are pervasive in today's society, even secular Western society (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Moore & Myerhoff, 1977). Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989) contend that in

contemporary society the sacred and profane are less distinct: religion is secularised, and the secular is sacralised, with consumer behaviour and perhaps advertising (Otnes & Scott, 1996), shaping the process. As a result of this secularisation, there are examples of human rituals in obvious places such as religious ceremonies, political conventions and weddings, and the less obvious such as maternity hospitals, gift giving and at dinner tables on secular holidays such as Thanksgiving Day in the USA.

It is the area of sport, however, that is of interest in this thesis, yet relatively little marketing research on sport and ritual has been performed. What sparse literature exists on sport and ritual is mostly concerned with sport in general being correctly (Birrell, 1981) or incorrectly (Blanchard, 1988) described as ritual; or the ritual nature of individual sports such as karate (Donahue, 1993), triathlon (Granskog, 1993), baseball (D. B. Holt, 1992) or professional wrestling[1] (Migliore, 1993).

Other sporting related ritual articles focus on sports players and their superstitions (Bagnato, 1997; Bleak & Frederick, 1998; Fischer, 1997; Todd & Brown, 2003), sport as a cultural phenomenon (Savant, 2003), or the ceremonies that surround sporting events such as the Olympic Games

[1] This author is well aware of the ongoing arguments for and against classifying professional wrestling as a sport rather than purely entertainment, and is not bold enough to make an aspersion either way.

(MacAloon, 1996). These studies and reports are largely anthropological or sociological in nature, and do not consider marketing implications. There is even a recent sports marketing article presumably about sporting rituals (Grainger & Andrews, 2005), where the word ritual only appears in the title, and not anywhere within.

Conspicuous by its absence from mainstream marketing, more specifically sport marketing literature, is any application of the dimensions or attributes of ritual to sports fans. One notable exception is Holt (1992) whose ethnographic fieldwork at Wrigley Field in Chicago lead to a critical essay on applying ritual to baseball consumption behaviour. Before analysing Holt's work, it is useful to introduce and define the concept of ritual.

Almost 2500 years ago, in the third century B.C.E., Chinese philosopher Hsün Tzu wrote:

> "*The line is the acme of straightness, the scale is the acme of fairness, the T square and compass are the acme of squareness and roundness, and rites are the highest achievement of the Way of man. Therefore, those who do not follow and find satisfaction in rites may be called people without direction, but those who do follow and find satisfaction in them are called men of direction.*" (Hsün Tzu, translated by B. Watson, 1967 p. 95)

Allowing some latitude for politically incorrect gender specific words, and noting that this is a translation from another language, this passage shows the importance of rites and ritual in society and culture for thousands of years. Indeed ritual provides men with identity and women with solidarity, along with being one of the oldest human activities. Ritual is as important as eating, sex and shelter (Grimes, 1996).

Researchers have found that by studying ritual, societal behaviour becomes more understandable and explainable. As an example, a more recent passage than the writings of Hsün Tzu is from anthropologist Monica Wilson who researched African tribal rituals in the 1950s and wrote:

> *"…rituals reveal values at the deepest level…men express in ritual what moves them most, and since the form of expression is conventionalized and obligatory, it is the values of the group that are revealed. I see in the study of rituals the key to an understanding of the essential constitution of human societies"* (Wilson, 1954, p. 240).

The terms rite and ritual are used widely throughout literature, and have varied meanings and definitions, mostly (but not always) in the practice of religious activities (Grimes, 1996). Most researchers, however, subscribe to Wilson's view whereby the study of a culture's rituals can lead to an insightful understanding of its belief systems (Davis-Floyd, 1996; Turner, 1969).

But what exactly is ritual? This is a difficult question for a single answer as there are many definitions and conceptualisations of ritual. There are, however, common themes that run through most of the definitions:

Winn (1996 p.553) provides an anthropological definition of ritual:

> *"…ritual is characterized by standardized, repetitive interpersonal symbolic actions, patterned according to social customs, which involve constant form over time and which influence or orient human affairs."*

Using similar words, prominent ritual researcher Rappaport (1999 p. 24) provides an ecological anthropologist's view of ritual as:

> *"…a form or structure, defining it as the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts…"*

In his work on the ritualisation of birthing in American hospitals, Davis-Floyd (1996 p. 148) defines ritual in similar terms:

> *"A ritual is a patterned, repetitive and symbolic enactment of a cultural belief or value; its primary purpose is alignment of the belief system of the individual with that of society."*

In his study applying grooming rituals to modern consumer behaviour, Rook (1985) points out that most definitions centre on the role ritual plays

in religion, which is less useful in the marketing context. Rook's (1985, p. 252) definition of ritual incorporates both religious and non-religious behaviours and forms the basis for the use of ritual throughout this thesis:

> *"…a type of expressive, symbolic activity constructed of multiple behaviors that occur in a fixed, episodic sequence, and that tend to be repeated over time. Ritual behavior is dramatically scripted and acted out and is performed with formality, seriousness, and inner intensity."*

Behaviour is a key of Rook's definition, as with the others listed here. Rituals are laced with emotion, symbolism and even cognition, but ritual must be performed (Ibrahim, 1988; Malley & Barrett, 2003) – either individually or in a group. Ritual and behaviour go hand in hand. Indeed, the ritualisation of the consumptive experience may better explain some purchase behaviour than attitudinal variables such as identification or motivation (Park, 1999).

Ritual and Sport

> *" Sport elaborates in its rituals what it means to be human"*
> (Eitzen, 1999)

As mentioned earlier, Holt (1992) studied the fans at Chicago's Wrigley Field and argued that baseball spectating is not a ritual. He analysed three

conceptions of ritual, one of which was a combined Rook, Tetreault and Kleine definition (Rook, 1985; Tetreault & Kleine, 1990) he labelled RTK. Among other points, Holt argues that since some described rituals such as the televised Watergate hearings are not repetitive, then it suggests classifying all non-repetitive behaviour as ritual. He contends that ritual is not a type of activity, but a dimension of all activity (D. B. Holt, 1992). Kertzer (1996) somewhat agrees with Holt by writing that human experience can be categorised by the coherent framework that ritual provides.

Holt's argument that baseball spectating is not ritual seems myopic for two reasons. First, Rook defines ritual as behaviour that *tends* to be repeated over time – not *must* be repeated. Certainly some rituals are performed on a daily basis globally (such as weddings), but not necessarily by the same people over and over again. The Watergate hearings finished in 1973, but televised hearings continue to this day, albeit with different participants. Second, Holt claims that some rituals are not enacted in groups, therefore the RTK definition does not hold. Nowhere in Rook's definition of ritual does he stipulate that ritual must be performed in groups. It is true that rituals generally have observers as well as participants, but sometimes the observer is also the participant. People perform many religious rituals alone.

Particularly pertinent is Holt's criticisms that Rook, Tetreault and Klein's understanding of ritual is incomplete. He contends that for the construct of ritual to have real meaning, both the antecedents and consequences of ritual should be described and analysed (D. B. Holt, 1992), not just the traits of ritual. Holt wants to know what leads people to be ritualistic, and what are the outcomes or ritual behaviour. Although a thorough examination of the antecedents of ritual are beyond the scope of this dissertation, the consequences of ritual, and its marketing implications, form a large part of the managerial recommendations of this study. Researchers of the concept of habit and habitual behaviour may notice some similarities in the conceptualisation of habit and ritual, so it is important to contrast the two concepts.

Ritual and Habit

Examining habit earlier in this thesis raised some questions whether the study of habitual purchase behaviour is useful for investigating purchase behaviour in sports. Blanchard (1988) argues ritual must have explicit religious ends, and finds the concept of secular ritual meaningless since almost every behaviour in everyday life from brushing teeth to taking the dog for a walk could then be rituals. Therefore, it is important to differentiate ritual behaviour from habit. Whereas rituals and habits share

the common ground of repetition of an event over time, they are not the same concept and differ accordingly:

- First, rituals are a repetition of a fixed sequence of *multiple* behaviours over time (Rook, 1985).
- Second, rituals contain artefacts and symbolism that are taken seriously by the ritualistic consumer (Rook, 1985), and are performed (Moore & Myerhoff, 1977) with a sense of formality (Rappaport, 1996).
- Third, a higher level of consumer involvement distinguishes ritual from habit (Celsi & Olson, 1988; Tetreault & Kleine, 1990).
- Fourth, ritualistic behaviour appears to stimulate a higher level of affective response than does habitual behaviour (Warner, 1959).
- Last, rituals are ordered, have a beginning, middle and end (Moore & Myerhoff, 1977), and tend to be less amenable to modification or extinction than habits (Kertzer, 1988; La Fontaine, 1985).

It is possible to have ritual without habit (weddings for example - although it can be said that some people do make a habit out of getting married), and habit without ritual such as tying one's shoelaces (Rook, 1985). Fans may engage in ritualistic behaviour to influence the outcome of a particular

event (putting on the lucky socks) which may be classified as superstitious, or the ritualistic behaviour may be demonstrated for other reasons such as social interaction or group affiliation (painting one's face in team colours).

Driver's (1996) theory of ritual is more functionally based than Rook's definition (Treise, Wolburg, & Otnes, 1999), and suggests that rituals provide three "gifts" to society: order, the experience of community and individual transformation. To better illuminate Driver's "gifts" and to analyse the role ritual plays in the lives of people and of societies, each of the elements of ritual follow:

Multiple Behaviours

At its elemental level, a ritual comprises more than one behaviour, although the complexity of the ritual (in terms of number of behaviours) is not strictly defined. No single feature of ritual is peculiar to it, rather it is the conjoining of these rites or individual behaviours that creates a unique ritual (Rappaport, 1996). For example, people eat turkey and watch football on television, and researchers would not classify this behaviour as ritualistic. However, eating turkey and watching football on Thanksgiving Day are almost necessary elements of the Thanksgiving ritual.

Rituals are not arbitrary, they have purpose (Davis-Floyd, 1996), and each of the elements of a ritual are performed in a sequence that tends to be fixed. Much like a good story, formal rituals have a carefully constructed and cohesive beginning, middle and end (Goethals, 1996). This cohesive quality is confirmed by Jennings (1982) who calls rituals a "pattern of action".

Some contend that ritual is mindless or thoughtless action, even using habitual to describe the routinised performance of the behaviour (Bell, 1996; Lewis, 1980; Staal, 1996). This is not a universally held belief however, as most researchers argue that the behaviour and thought are closely associated in ritual. In a religious context, Edward Shils (1968 p. 736) put it best when he wrote, "beliefs could exist without rituals; rituals, however, could not exist without beliefs". Indeed famous French theologist Emile Durkheim (1996) defines ritual in an entirely religious context by declaring that ritual and belief are the two halves that make up the whole of religion.

As with other ritualistic activities, people would not perform some of these "multiple behaviours" outside of the ritual process. Standing up and yelling at the umpire or referee may be great stress relief, and is a common activity at professional sporting events. The same behaviour, however, at a

junior league game involving children is increasingly deemed unacceptable. In this sense, rituals can absorb behavioural latitude (Arnould, 2001), thus allowing the performer to maintain a sense of community while possibly performing behaviour that might be anti-social in other circumstances.

Symbolism

Symbols, as used here, are objects or actions filled with cultural meaning. Rituals work by using the messages sent to those who receive or observe the symbols (Davis-Floyd, 1996). Formality is another aspect of ritualistic behaviour with researchers noting that rituals tend to be performed at times determined by a calendar, clock or special circumstances (Rappaport, 1996). Certainly the team schedule and stadium could provide these special circumstances. Tambiah (1996) writes that the entire football match shares features with ritual in that a match contains a structured order of proceedings, a sense of community and an awareness by participants and observers that it is not an everyday event.

Adding to the special nature of ritual is the space within which the ritual is performed. The space (with sports the stadium or field) can be extraordinary and can even act as one of the symbols used in ritual

performance (Goethals, 1996). For example, Boston Red Sox fans pay homage to the 'green monster' – a wall in left field unlike no other in baseball. The famous twin towers of the old Wembley football stadium in London guided fans to the ground from afar. This is something football lovers hope will be repeated when the new Wembley stadium opens with its unique metal arch.

Sport may be the ultimate expression of the power of symbolism in Western society. Whereas some believe that members of modern societies behave in goal-oriented, pragmatic ways, early twentieth century legal scholar Thurman Arnold observed that human conduct was largely symbolic. He claimed:

> *"Society is generally more interested in standing on the side lines and watching itself go by in a whole series of different uniforms than it is in practical objectives."* (Arnold as quoted in Kertzer, 1996 p. 336)

Although Arnold was not writing about sport or sports spectators, his description of society is remarkably similar to what can be observed in a sporting stadium, and shows how symbolic the sports experience can be.

Symbolism through ritual also distinguishes some sporting events from others by careful design. The Olympic Games, held every four years is replete with ritual and symbolism, which helps distinguish it from other

athletic events. This was in the mind of the father of the modern Olympics, Pierre de Coubertin who in 1910 wrote that it is "primarily through the ceremonies that the Olympiad must distinguish itself" from other championships (MacAloon, 1996).

Involvement and Affective Response

Whereas the information processing model views consumers as logical thinkers that make purchase decisions to solve problems, the model leaves out important experiential aspects of consumption (Holbrook & Hirschmann, 1982). This experiential view regards consumption as a "primarily subjective state of consciousness" with associated symbols, aesthetic criteria and hedonic responses such as fantasies, emotions and sensory pleasures (Holbrook & Hirschmann, 1982). Even with the repeated behaviour common to rituals, ritual behaviour can create new emotions each time it is performed (Park, 1999).

Previous sporting research has found that experiential factors, in particular affect and enjoyment, can lead to fan satisfaction (Madrigal, 1995). Performance of rituals can also elicit a higher sense of freedom, which releases feelings of love and participation (Driver, 1998). These are useful feelings for sports fans to have on game day.

Learning may also be enhanced by ritual. Ritual tells the "right way to do things" (Houston, 1999 p.542). Participants gather information and learn to a greater degree from events that carry an emotional charge (Davis-Floyd, 1996). The repetitive and intense messages created by ritual performance can produce this emotional atmosphere. In sports, this affective experience may lead to attendees learning more about the game, its rules, player strengths and weaknesses, along with the nuances of tactics and strategy – leading to enhanced enjoyment of the game.

Resistance to Change

There is in-built conservatism in rituals such that ritual forms are slower to change than many other aspects of Western culture (Kertzer, 1996). Their constancy of form over time allows people to derive the sense of continuity that accompanies most ritualistic behaviour. To be effective, a ritual must repeat its basic message or messages over and over. This redundancy helps provide each participant and observer with the same level of cognitive functioning regarding the experience, and helps maintain the status quo in society (Davis-Floyd, 1996). Some invariance is characteristic of rituals, both human and non-human (Rappaport, 1996). Tradition may be the key to this resistance to change (Tambiah, 1996). Rituals performed for many years tend to become stable over time, thus perpetuating the invariance, while resolving paradox and inconsistency in daily life (d' Aquili &

Laughlin, 1975; Homans, 1941). If people are able to control their rituals, they will have control over their life (Handelman, 2004).

Resistance to change does not mean complete invariance however. Rituals can evolve over time, new rituals arise, and old rituals can die. Sometimes sports rituals change due to policy amendments, such as most American universities with Native American symbols "encouraged" to adopt non-offensive symbols. The rituals involved with the old symbols surely die. In other cases, tragedy has eliminated some sporting rituals. In 1999 twelve students died at Texas A & M University when the bonfire lit as a prelude to the Texas football game collapsed. This ritual no longer exists. Sometimes rituals can evolve, either by imitation or circumstantial changes. Football teams the world over have used the song "You'll never walk alone", made famous by the Liverpool Football Club in the U.K.

This dimension of resistance to change is particularly salient to this study. Are sports fans displaying habitual behaviour by attending professional games on a regular basis? Or is their behaviour on game day ritualistic? Perhaps neither or both, but marketers should be interested to find out more about this 'resistance to change' element of ritual, since customers resistant to switching are desired.

Ritual and Community

Following Wilson's (1954) observations that the study of ritual can lead to an understanding of human society, the early work of Victor Turner (1969) describes the importance of ritual in affirming communal unity. Probably the most prominent outcome of ritual is the social integration and sense of unity it fosters (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; d' Aquili & Laughlin, 1975; Durkheim, 1912, 1995).

Chinese author Xunzi believes that ritual's origins and rationale come from the need to create order in the community by allowing the expression of emotion and fulfilment of human nature (Campany, 1996). One of the primary purposes of ritual is to align the belief system of the individual with that of society (Davis-Floyd, 1996), and for ritual participants to discover who they are in the world (Jennings, 1982) via performance of the ritual.

Driver (1996) believes that rituals are community making events, but wonders if the rituals bring order to society, or if the order in ritual creates the communal bond? Either way, ritual and community are closely linked concepts, and ritual action is a major means of social integration (Goethals, 1996). Given (1993) theorises that rituals such as singing the team song during the inning break of a baseball game may synchronise the biological

rhythms of the audience, thereby co-ordinating arousal, emotion and group action.

Active participation of rituals is essential, with the ritual observer deriving less social integration than the participant (Goethals, 1996). Marshall (2002) describes "belonging" as an outcome of ritual, which he explains, is one step beyond formal group membership, and includes attraction, identification and cohesion.

Therefore, performing a common ritual behaviour on game day allows the spectator to integrate and assimilate with other attendees at a sporting event, learning what is required of in-group behaviour. In this sense, rituals can both transmit knowledge, and become a vehicle for gaining knowledge (Jennings, 1982). For example, mothers use the components of ritual (artefacts, scripts, roles and audience) to teach children behaviours necessary to enable them to successfully integrate into a birthday party (Otnes, Nelson, & McGrath, 1995). Children are taught to keep passing the wrapped parcel, removing only one layer of wrapping at a time, until the prize is revealed.

In a study of secular ritual in the family home, Haines (1988) found a family's ritual life is significantly related to the overall cohesion and

solidarity of the household. All of these concepts are closely aligned with the definition of identification. Social psychologists have also found evidence to support the strong relationship between social connections and identification (Callero, 1985; Hoelter, 1983; , 1993).

There are elements of rituality that also indicate a relationship between the behaviour of ritual and the affective state of commitment. Previous sporting based research has found that experiential factors, in particular affect and enjoyment, can lead to fan satisfaction (Madrigal, 1995). Performance of rituals can also elicit a higher sense of freedom which releases feelings of love and participation (Driver, 1998). Beatty and Kahle (1988) describe commitment as 'emotional attachment', and the emotions generated through ritual performance may boost these feelings. The repetitive nature of ritual may also lead to the 'mere exposure' effect (Berscheid & Reis, 1998) identified by Zajonc (1968). Repeated exposure to a stimulus is often sufficient to increase positive attitudes towards the stimulus.

Learning may also be enhanced by ritual. Information is gathered and lessons are learned to a greater degree from events which carry an emotional charge (Davis-Floyd, 1996). For example, on the Jewish holiday of Passover, families gather and perform the Seder dinner in an ordered

and ritualised way each year. Indeed the Hebrew word Seder means 'order'. While preparing for and performing this ritual each year, Jewish children learn about the stories of the exodus from Egypt, the ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea. The repetitive and intense messages created by ritual performance can produce this emotional atmosphere.

In the sports context, this affective experience may lead attendees to learn more about the game, its rules, player strengths and weaknesses, along with the nuances of tactics and strategy – leading to enhanced enjoyment of the game. Singing the team song with others requires knowledge of the lyrics and melody, and can also transmit some team history and tradition to others. While the outside casual observer may find the ritual interesting or aesthetically pleasing, their learning and transformation will be to a lesser extent than those participating (Goethals, 1996). Ritual practices exert some form of control over the attention of participants (Goffman, 1967).

Studying the social sub-worlds of a North American YMCA, Gahwiler and Havitz (1998) found that both attitudinal loyalty (commitment) and behavioural loyalty positively relate to social integration. In developing a scale to measure consumer orientation towards a sporting event, Pons, Mourali and Nyeck (2006 p.278) write:

> "*Socializing rituals performed before, during or after a given sporting event are reflective of an individual's orientation toward*

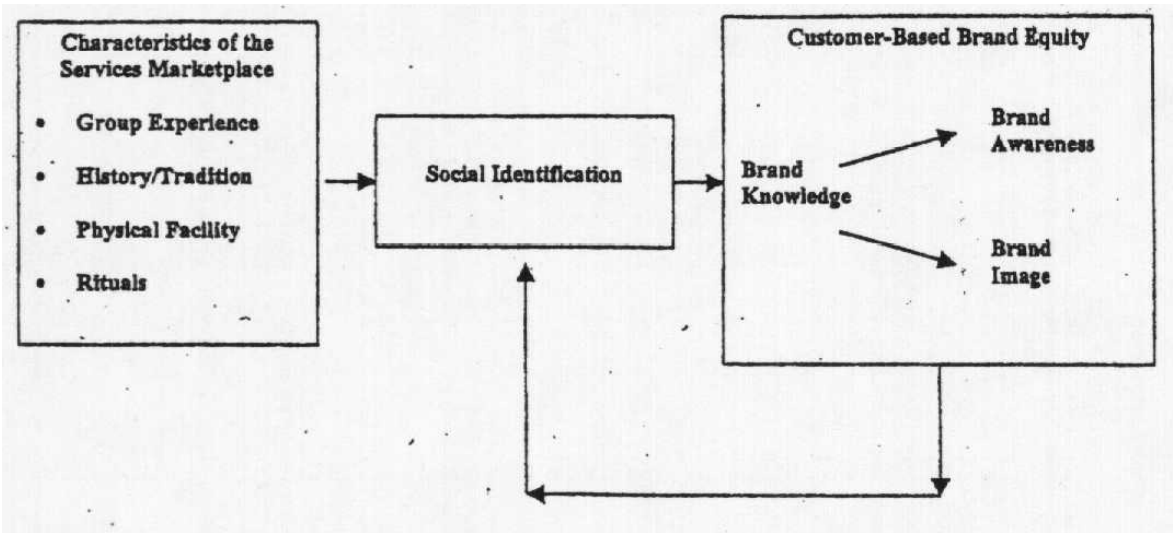
this sporting event because he or she chooses the sporting event over other forms of leisure to interact socially and share his or her emotions."

In this sense, sports fans use rituals to identify with other fans as much as with the team (King, 2004).

Providing Services with Rituals

In their article on Social Identity and brands, Underwood, Bond and Baer (2001) posit there are lessons to be learned from the sports marketplace regarding brand building and social identification. Figure 12 below illustrates their conceptual model:

Figure 12: Social Identity-Brand Equity Conceptual Model



They view the rituals involved in the consumption of services as a potentially differentiating factor between service providers, and as an antecedent to identification. For example, without the rituals involved with the Olympic Games, they would just be another athletic event held every four years. The high level of involvement exhibited by sports fans allows sports providers the opportunity to develop rituals, that providers of other high involvement services (see Figure 9 earlier) such as restaurants, hotels and entertainment could also use. Their proposal implies that if these managers strategically create, facilitate or promote rituals involved with consuming their services, social identification will increase, leading to greater brand equity.

As depicted in Figure 12, rituals and history/tradition are characteristics of the services marketplace. Along similar lines, Irwin, Sutton and McCarthy (2002) posit ritual as a driver of history/tradition, which in turns drives identification with the team. In an organisational setting, Ashforth and Mael (1989) propose that manipulating symbols and rituals can make an individual's membership in the group more salient, while also showing the values the organisation represents.

There are rich and diverse opportunities for spectators to perform rituals on game day. They can be group behaviours such as tailgating or singing

the club song in chorus, or individual behaviours like praying for team success. Sports fan rituals can be complex like creating a large sign or banner to take to the game, or simple like wearing a lucky charm.

Related to ritual, and also prevalent on game day for both spectators and players are superstitious behaviours, which deserve investigation. In sports, superstitions abound, and provide fertile sources of anecdotes for writers.

Superstition

Superstition differs from ritual, even though it is a subset of ritualistic behaviour. The American Heritage Dictionary (2000) defines superstition as an irrational belief that an object, action, or circumstance not logically related to a course of events influences its outcome. When related to sport, superstitious behaviours are defined as:

> *"actions which are repetitive, formal, sequential, distinct from technical performance, and which the athletes believe to be powerful in controlling luck or other external factors"* (Womack as cited in Bleak & Frederick, 1998, p. 2).

This definition classifies all superstitious behaviour as ritualistic due to the repeat nature and formality. Some writers even use the terms

interchangeably, describing superstitions as rituals (Bagnato, 1997; Fischer, 1997). Rituals and superstitions also share common ground with religion. Religion is the root of ritualistic behaviour, and Rudski's (2003) empirical study of superstitious beliefs found individuals with higher levels of religious beliefs tended to be superstitious. Similarly, Mowen and Carlson's (2003) study into the antecedents and consequences of superstition found interest in sports to be a significant antecedent to superstition.

Most research of sport and superstition has focused on the athlete, and not the attendee, as players are notoriously superstitious (Laughlin, 1993). For example, Fischer (1997) examined whether baseball and football athletes considered praying before a game, abstaining from sex, or eating a specific pre-game meal beneficial to their on-field performance. Other writers describe baseball pitchers kissing statues for luck (Nelson, 2003), basketball players putting on their uniform in a certain way (Buhrmann, Brown, & Zaugg, 1982), and a baseball shortstop who stuffs cheeseburgers into his back pocket while batting (Wolff & Stone, 1995). In a somewhat humorous look at the highly superstitious nature of ice hockey players in the National Hockey League (NHL), Bagnato (1997, p. 41) writes "In the NHL, it's not uncommon for players to have more rituals than teeth."

Why are superstitions so common among athletes? In the high stress world of professional sports, any method athletes have of gaining control (even if the control is illusory) over external variables or their own level of good luck may be worth a try (Todd & Brown, 2003). Superstition among athletes might be explained by two cognitive constructs also analysed in the study of problem gamblers; illusory control and illusory correlation (Tonneatto, 1999). Athletic illusory control is the belief that athletes can influence events over which they have no control as described above. Illusory correlation tends to occur after the event, and describes assigning causality where none exists. A famous example of illusory correlation is the "Curse of the Bambino" said to fall over baseball's Boston Red Sox. Until they won the 2004 World Series, their 86 years of failure were attributed to trading away Babe Ruth (known as the Bambino) to fierce rivals New York Yankees in 1905 (Nelson, 2003).

Superstitious rituals may reduce ambiguity in professional athletes who, if at all possible, want to leave nothing to chance in their preparation or on-field performance. Can the same be said for spectators? If sports players use superstition and ritual to reduce anxiety and control luck, then sports fans may do the same. For example, in the United States, baseball spectators put on their "rally cap" (wearing a cap upside down or with the peak to the side) when their team is losing late in the game to increase the

chances of their team winning. It is also taboo to mention a 'no-hitter' to other fans when your baseball team's pitcher is nearing the late innings with no hits yet to his name. Undoubtedly, fans have superstitions such as lucky items they wear on game day, timing bathroom breaks – even a lucky position on the couch when watching at home.

Summary of Previous Research

In summary, loyalty is a multi-dimensional concept with attitudinal and behavioural components. The behavioural component of interest to most sports marketers is repeat attendance as it drives a large part of overall revenue. Habit is an area worth exploring as past behaviour is generally a good predictor of future purchase behaviour with consumer goods, and may provide insights in the service sector.

Researchers investigating the drivers of attendance find mixed results when exploring the peripheral factors such as consumer demographics, economics and weather. Stronger relationships exist between attendance and internal psychological factors such as motivation, satisfaction, commitment and identification. Yet internal factors fail to tell the whole story. There is still considerable unexplained variance in attendance.

While there are behavioural outcomes of commitment and identification, there may also be a behavioural dimension of these constructs that, when used in conjunction, may better explain attendance. Ritual may be this behavioural dimension. The roots of ritual lie in religion, and sport and religion share some important features such as tradition, ceremony, symbolism and devoted followers. Rituals help individuals learn about history, provide order in society, strengthen the bond between group members, and may lead to favourable outcomes such as increased purchase or decreased brand switching sensitivity.

Chapter 3: Developing Hypotheses

Hypotheses

This study proposes a model for examining behavioural loyalty (attendance) at team sporting events by investigating the relationship between the constructs of motivation, ritual, identification, commitment and attendance.

Motivation

Scales to measure the attendance motivation of sports fans generally find motivation a better predictor of cognition than behaviour. Therefore in this study, motivation should better predict attitudinal loyalty (commitment) than behavioural loyalty (attendance).

Therefore:

> *H1: Motivation will have a stronger positive association with attitudinal loyalty than behavioural loyalty.*

Habit

For frequently purchased consumer goods in stable markets, the study of habit formation and the use of the negative binomial distribution (NBD)

has been particularly effective in predicting penetration rates and frequency of buyers of a brand or category (A. Ehrenberg et al., 1990). Tapp (2004) theorises that older supporters, leading more stable lives, may settle into a form of auto-repurchase of sporting tickets and thus mimic the NBD. However, one of the conditions of using the NBD (ticket purchase being Poisson distributed) is not satisfied in most professional sporting arenas that sell season tickets. Each ticket purchased for an individual game is not independent of each other if members buy a season ticket for all games. Season ticket holders can comprise up to 80% of some home game attendances in the AFL (Georgiu, Neale, & Purchase, 2003). While AFL ticket purchase is largely a subscription market, actual ticket use (attendance) could still be stochastic. Members with a season ticket must choose to attend each game, which theoretically validates using the NBD. Therefore:

> *H2: Attendance at AFL games does not follow the negative binomial distribution.*

Identification → Attitudinal Loyalty (Commitment)

While identification and commitment appear distinct constructs in an organisational setting (Riketta, 2005), they may measure the same thing in sports. Corresponding with the findings of other sports researchers (see

Wann & Pierce, 2003), identification and commitment are hypothesised as essentially the same construct.

Therefore:

> *H3: In a sports fan→sports team relationship, identification and attitudinal loyalty (commitment) are the same construct.*

Ritual

In much the same way as self concept is composed of a social identity and a personal identity, according to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985), the rituals that fans perform on game day are both personal and social. Depersonalisation is the term used in social psychology to describe an individual's shift in focus from their personal identity to their social identity (Banaji & Prentice, 1994). The consequences of depersonalisation are that people tend to behave as group members rather than individuals.

Rituals consist of a wide range of actions that vary from ***social*** and public displays, to extremely ***private*** behaviours (Gainer, 1995). Some fan rituals are observable and require participation from others, such as singing the club song, and other rituals are private and performed individually, such as praying for team success. Marshall (2002) proposes that public (or social) rituals are more likely to produce belonging and belief than personal

rituals. If this is the case then social rituals will have more influence on attendance and commitment than personal rituals.

Therefore:

H4a: The construct of Fan Ritual is two-dimensional, comprising personal and social rituals.

H4b: Social rituals will have a stronger effect on behavioural loyalty and commitment than personal rituals.

Commitment/Identification → Behavioural Loyalty

If, as hypothesised earlier, Attitudinal Loyalty (Commitment) and Identification are essentially the same construct in sports, then the combined construct should also influence Behavioural Loyalty. Many researchers have studied the attitude-behaviour link (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996), and Kraus found an average correlation of 0.38 across a number of studies (for a meta-analysis see Kraus, 1995).

With identification, due to the strong sense of attachment and belonging they feel to a team, highly identified fans are likely to behave differently to lowly identified fans (Mitriano, 1999; Sutton et al., 1997). Sports researchers have found many behavioural outcomes of identification, most desirable, and some undesirable. For example, highly identified fans are

more predisposed to purchase licensed team merchandise (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Madrigal, 2001; Wann & Branscombe, 1993) than lowly identified fans. Researchers have also found a positive relationship between levels of identification and game attendance (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Schurr et al., 1988). One undesirable outcome of identification is aggression by highly identified fans towards opposing teams (Wann, Haynes, McLean, & Pullen, 2003) or fans of other teams (Dimmock & Grove, 2005), often without even knowing why (Langer, 1989).

H5: Commitment/identification with the team is positively associated with behavioural loyalty towards the team.

Ritual → Identification/Commitment

Ritual is used throughout history as a major means of social integration (Goethals, 1996). Driver believes that rituals are community making events, but wonders if the rituals bring order to society, or is it the order in ritual that creates the communal bond (Driver, 1996)? One of the primary purposes of ritual is to align the belief system of the individual with that of society (Davis-Floyd, 1996), and for ritual participants to discover who they are in the world (Jennings, 1982) via performance of the ritual. While investigating consumers of the performing arts, Gainer (1995) found that shared consumption rituals bound consumers together by managing their

social relationships. This indicates that increased ritual activities among community members may strengthen their commitment to each other. Therefore:

H6a: Social ritual is positively associated with commitment/ identification towards the team.
H6b: Personal ritual is positively associated with commitment/ identification towards the team.

Ritual → Behavioural Loyalty

There is no empirical evidence to show that more ritualistic sports fans will attend games more often, as there is no measure for ritual available. There is however, an element of ritual that is resistant to change. Some level of invariance is a characteristic of all rituals, both human and non-human (Rappaport, 1996). Tradition may be the key to this resistance to change (Tambiah, 1996). Those rituals that have been performed for many years tend to become stable over time, thus perpetuating the invariance. Perhaps this resistance to change may result in higher retention rates among attendees.

Due to its close hypothesised relationship with identification, and ritual's classification as the behavioural dimension of identification it is hypothesised:

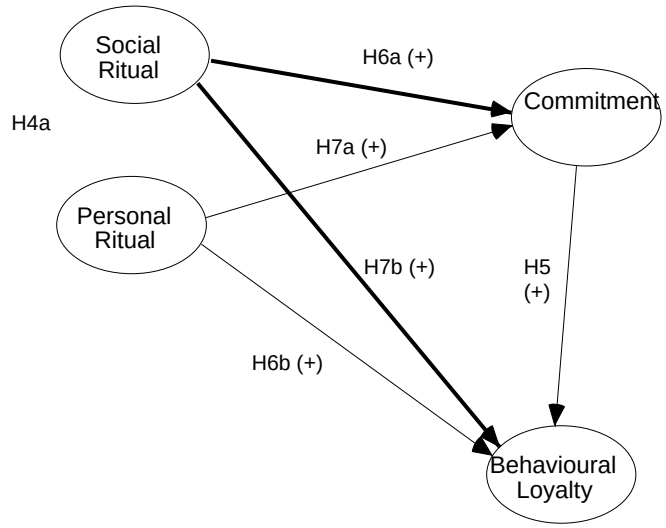
H7a: Social ritual is positively associated with behavioural loyalty towards the team.

H7b: Personal ritual is positively associated with behavioural loyalty towards the team.

The Model

Schematically drawing the links laid out from the above hypotheses, the proposed direct-effects model A is shown in Figure 13 below. Two constructs, discussed earlier, are left out of the proposed model. First, motivation is hypothesised to be a weak explainer of behavioural loyalty, and so does not appear in the model. Second, since identification and commitment are hypothesised to be essentially the same construct, both are not necessary.

Figure 13: Proposed Model A: Direct Effects



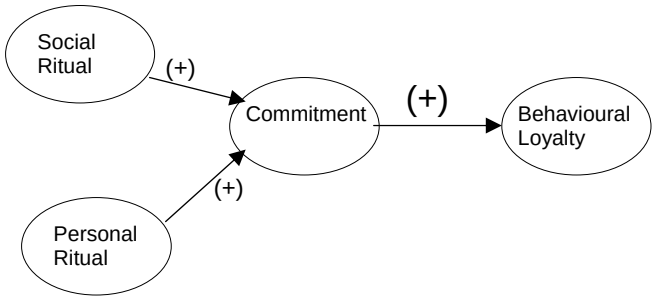
Model A proposes all links to be significant and positive, with the bold links expected to be stronger.

Alternative Models

With Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), researchers can only fail to reject models rather than accepting them. In most cases, there are equivalent models that may fit the data equally well. Researchers should explore these options by testing alternative models (and therefore alternative explanations) when analysing data with SEM (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Thompson, 1997).

The first alternative model, Model B – Mediated, shown below in Figure 14 proposes commitment as the mediator between ritual and behavioural loyalty.

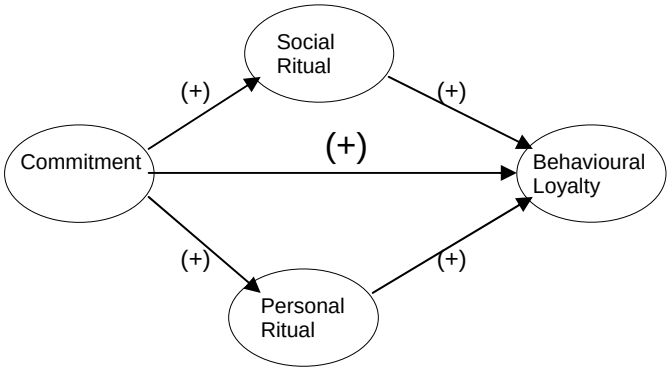
Figure 14: Alternate Model B: Mediated



No direct links are hypothesised between ritual and behavioural loyalty. Ritual builds commitment, which in turn builds loyalty. This model is faithful to those recent studies that view the identification/commitment construct as the important predictor of game day attendance, and introduces the personal and social ritual constructs identified earlier.

The second alternate model, Model C – Justification of Effort, as shown in Figure 15 below, proposes commitment as the antecedent of both personal and social ritual, and behavioural loyalty as a result of ritual and commitment.

Figure 15: Alternate Model C: Justification of Effort



Justification of Effort (JoE) is a term used in Psychology to describe the consequences of engaging in an activity to obtain some goal (Axsom & Cooper, 1985). The concept of JoE initially came from Aronson and Mills' (1959) experiment trying to get subjects to join a sexual discussion group. The more effort the subjects put into joining the group, the more they were likely to participate in the group and evaluate other group members more positively. In this case of sporting behaviour, the model proposes that the more effort the attendees put into their rituals, the more they will attend to justify that effort.

These two alternate models may be just as plausible as the proposed Direct Effects model, but since the relationship between ritual and consumption is untested, the direct effects model makes more sense, and should be more illustrative of the relationships between the constructs.

Therefore:

H8: The proposed Direct Effects model A, will better fit the data than either the Mediated model B or Justification of Effort model C.

Chapter 4: Research Methods

Developing Measures

The process to test the hypotheses involves:

- using previously validated measures for motivation and attitudinal loyalty/commitment
- designing an instrument to measure team identification in Australian football
- constructing a new measure for fan ritual.

Previously validated measures for motivation, identification and attitudinal loyalty were pre-tested twice, with both student and football spectator samples. The measure for fan ritual was constructed using the process outlined by Churchill (1979) and is described later in this chapter.

Motivation Scale

The Sports Interest Inventory (SII), as described in chapter 2, is a comprehensive scale that measures a number of core and contextual motives related to sporting teams (Funk et al., 2003). Attendees respond to questions on the factors that motivate them to attend games by circling a

number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) on a Likert-type scale.

While the SII has been used in a variety of sporting situations and countries (Funk et al., 2001; Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002; Funk et al., 2004), one potential source of concern with using the scale is that it has not been tested on Australian consumers for a professional Australian team sport. Although there is nothing to suggest the SII model would not fit data gathered in Australia, researchers should not assume that any marketing model holds for cross-national generalisation (Steenkamp, 2005 p. 6). Cultural and sport differences between the two countries require replication. The present study marks the first time the SII has been distributed to spectators attending a competitive men's team sport outside the United States.

The SII examined the relationships between the 33 observed variables and 11 first order latent variables. In the final questionnaire located in Appendix B, the order of the 33 SII items was scrambled, so for clarity

Table 2 shows the construct descriptions and corresponding scale items.

Table 2: Sport Interest Inventory

Family Bonding (opportunity to spend quality time with family)	▪ Attending games gives me a chance to bond with my family. ▪ I enjoy sharing the experience of attending a game with family members. ▪ An important reason why I attend games is to spend time quality time with my family.
Friends Bonding (opportunity to spend quality time with friends)	▪ Attending games gives me a chance to bond with my friends. ▪ I enjoy sharing the experience of attending a game with friends. ▪ An important reason why I attend games is to spend quality time with my friends
Drama (the element of uncertainty as to the outcome of the game)	▪ I prefer watching a close game rather than a one-sided game. ▪ I like games where the outcome is uncertain. ▪ A close game between two teams is more enjoyable than a blow-out.
Entertainment Value (affordability of the entertainment)	▪ The games provide affordable entertainment. ▪ Games are great entertainment for the price. ▪ I attend games because it is an entertaining event for a reasonable price.
Escape (a desire to "get away" or be a part of something different from the "normal routine")	▪ I like attending games because they provide me with a distraction from my daily life for a while. ▪ The games provide me with an opportunity to escape the reality of my daily life for a while. ▪ Getting away from the routine of everyday life is an important reason why I would attend a game.
Excitement (surrounding the games and spectacle)	▪ I like the excitement associated with the games ▪ I enjoy the excitement surrounding the games. ▪ I find games to be very exciting.
Player Interest (watch and follow a specific favourite player)	▪ I watch the games because of individual players more than of the team competing. ▪ I'm more of a fan of individual players than I am of the entire team. ▪ The main reason why I attend is to cheer for my favourite player.
Role Model (players serve as positive role models for young children)	▪ Players provide inspiration for girls and boys ▪ I think the players are good role models for young girls and boys. ▪ The players provide inspiration for young people.
Socialisation (opportunity to interact with other spectators and fans)	▪ I enjoy interacting with other spectators and fans when attending games. ▪ Games have given me a chance to meet other people with similar interests as myself. ▪ I like to talk with other people sitting near me at games.
Team Interest (interest in the team as a whole rather than individual players)	▪ I consider myself a fan of the whole team more than a fan of a single player. ▪ I come to games to support the whole team. ▪ I am a fan of the entire team.
Vicarious Achievement (a heightened sense of self-esteem)	▪ I feel like I have won when the team wins. ▪ I feel a sense of accomplishment when the team wins. ▪ When the team wins, I feel a personal sense of achievement.

Attitudinal Loyalty/Commitment Scale

Mellens, Dekimpe and Steenkamp (1996) contend that different research questions demand different measurement approaches to attitudinal loyalty. They conclude that if the purpose of the research is to study loyalty as an indicator of purchase, then brand-oriented attitudinal measures are best. Along these lines, a primary purpose of this study is to investigate purchase (in the form of attendance), so therefore the commitment scale used is a brand (team) derivative of the Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) scale (Mahony et al., 2000). The full 14 item PCT scale was too long to administer in an already lengthy questionnaire, so according to the work of Funk and Pastore (2000), and Gladden and Funk (2001) the 14 items were reduced to four while still capturing the essence of the construct. The response format was a seven point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). The four-item scale is listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Attitudinal Loyalty/Commitment Scale

Attitudinal Loyalty/Commitment	▪ I would be willing to defend my favourite team publicly, even if it caused controversy. ▪ I could never change my affiliation from my favourite team to another professional team. ▪ I consider myself a committed fan of my favourite team. ▪ I would watch my favourite team regardless of which team they were playing against at the time.

Identification Scale

There are many established scales to measure identification, both organisational identification, and identification with a sports team. Elements of Wann and Branscombe's (1993) Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS) was used with some eliminations and modifications due to context. For example, the SSIS includes an item to measure how closely a fan followed their team via radio and television, but media behaviour is outside the scope of this dissertation. Adding an item from the earlier motivation scale measuring vicarious achievement as per the Team Identification Index (Trail & James, 2001) was important as this dimension is missing from the SSIS.

Like the attitudinal loyalty/commitment scale, the response format was a seven point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). The four-item scale is listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Identification with the Team

Identification with the Team	▪ I feel like I have won when my team wins. ▪ I attend games to support the whole team. ▪ When someone criticises my favourite team, it feels like a personal insult. ▪ I consider myself a fan of the team more than a fan of a single player.

Earlier in this study, commitment and identification are hypothesised as similar constructs in sports. To validate this identification scale and provide a stronger argument for using either commitment or identification (not both), a separate test was conducted comparing the above scale with the four-item Attitudinal Identification scale used in sports by Matsuoka, Chelladurai and Harada (2003) and provided in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Attitudinal Identification Scale used by Matsuoka et al.

Attitudinal Identification Scale used by Matsuoka et al. (2003)	▪ How important to you is it that your favourite team wins? ▪ How important is being a fan of your favourite team to you? ▪ How strongly do your friends see you as a fan of your favourite team? ▪ How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of your favourite team?

With a convenience sample of 67 marketing students from two classes, the results show a significant ($p<0.001$) Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.908 between the outcomes of the two scales. This suggests the identification scale used in this study is suitable for measuring identification with the team.

Fan Ritual Scale

There are currently no measures to determine the level of 'rituality' an individual exhibits – either in a religious or a sporting context. This is

perhaps due the complexity of the ritual construct, and the almost unlimited multitude of rituals available to be performed. One of the aims of this study is to develop the Fan Rituality Scale to rectify this measurement omission.

According to Churchill (1979) the procedure to construct a good marketing scale begins with specifying the domain via a solid literature review and then proceeds to generating sample items, collecting test data and then purifying the measure – checking for validity and reliability. This is the process used in this study to develop a measure for Fan Ritual.

Specifying the Domain

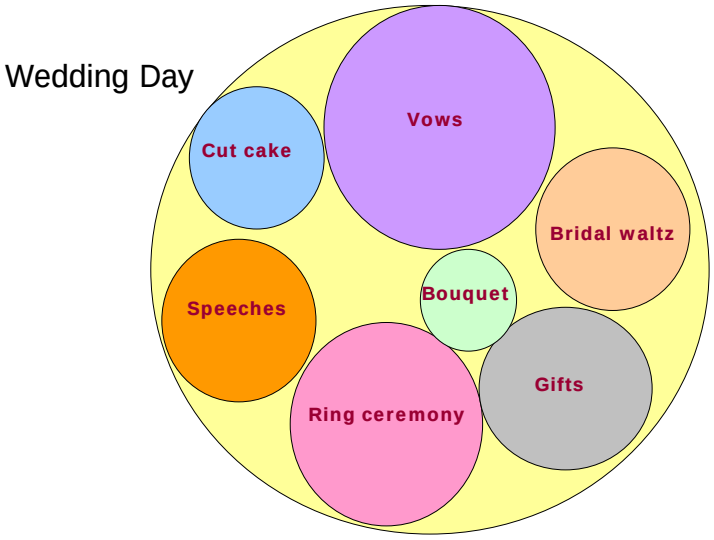
Based on the findings in the literature review in Chapter 2, this study proposes a two-dimensional construct of ritual comprised of social rituals and personal rituals. Social rituals are those performed either in groups, or with the purpose of involving others in the ritual. Personal rituals are performed individually and may be observable by others.

Behaviour is of critical importance when defining the domain of ritual and generating scale items. While rituals convey emotion and cognition, rituals must be performed and so each of the rituals involved in the measure must include behaviour.

Generating Sample Items

Before generating sample items, it is important to distinguish between the overall ritual of attending a sporting event, and the sub-rituals that comprise the game day ritual. Using the common ritual of weddings to illuminate, a typical wedding day is a ritual made up of many sub-rituals such as declaring marriage vows, exchanging rings, receiving gifts, waltzing with new spouse etc. A pictorial example is provided in Figure 16 below.

Figure 16: Wedding Day Sub-rituals



Individually each of these sub-rituals is probably not sufficient to make a wedding day, nor would removal of one or two of these sub-rituals completely invalidate the wedding day. People design weddings with the

particular sub-rituals of interest to them, and no two weddings are identical. The same principle applies on game day, so it was important to generate a list of sample items that covered the majority of sub-rituals performed.

Sample items came from a four-step process;

1. observation at professional football games
2. literature review
3. advice from marketing academics and
4. interviews with sport management practitioners.

Observing fans in sporting arenas on game day provided the starting point, and this was augmented by results from a literature review. For example, Gibson, Willming and Holdnak (2002) identified some of the rituals football fans performed on game day in college sports in the United States. Their list includes tailgating, wearing team colours, wearing team merchandise and staying until the game is finished regardless of the score. James, Breezeel and Ross (2001) studied tailgating at football games at the University of Illinois and found that tailgating (before or after the game) was integral to the overall game day experience. Ritual absorbs "behavioral latitude" (Arnould, 2001), so behaviour such as yelling abusive words at a

football umpire from the safety of the stadium seats, would be unacceptable in general day-to-day life.

This original list of sub-rituals was circulated to four sport marketing academics for their input. Then, interviews with three sport marketing practitioners resulted in refining and adding to the items.

Some of the points that resulted in consultation with academics and practitioners included:

- wearing the colours of your favourite team and wearing official merchandise may be distinct sub-rituals and so were separated
- tailgating, while popular in the United States was not widely practised in Australia, but the concept of gathering socially before a game was believed to be common to all professional sports in all countries
- participating in the sport at half-time or after the game is an old Australian football tradition, which due to increased security concerns is being phased out at the AFL level. Still, some practitioners believed it may be important at the grass-roots level
- some of the sub-rituals may be common to both spectators and athletes such as eating the same pre-game meal, or wearing a lucky charm and so were included in the initial list

- some academics wondered whether yelling or shouting at different groups (such as umpires or other fans) might be separate and distinct sub-rituals, so three shouting sub-rituals were included
- for club events, singing the team song was a common inclusion with all academics and practitioners, and for international events, this transferred to singing the national anthem
- while not constructive, fighting with others and streaking (removing clothes and running across the field) were common if not regular occurrences across the world
- praying for team success may be planned, spontaneous, individual or performed in groups, and so were separated

This process resulted in the list of 18 sub-rituals shown in Table 6.

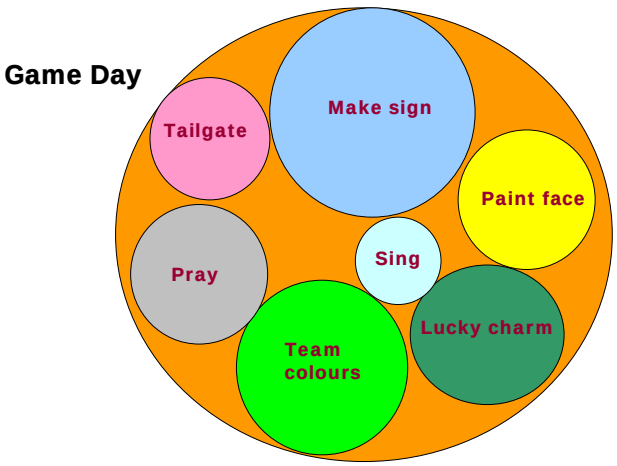
Table 6: Initial List of Attendance Sub-rituals

	Sub-rituals
1	Paint/decorate body
2	Make/buy sign
3	Purchase team merchandise
4	Wear team colours
5	Wear any part of official uniform
6	Sing team song/national anthem
7	Social event/tailgate
8	Argue with/shout at attendees
9	Argue with/shout at players

10	Argue with/shout at umpires
11	Participate at halftime/fulltime
12	Expose part of your body you normally would not
13	Physically fight with other attendees
14	Eat same pre-game meal on game day
15	Wear a visible lucky charm
16	Wear a lucky charm that cannot be seen
17	Individually pray for team success
18	Group pray for team success

Returning to the wedding day analogy, the academics and practitioners believed that the overall game day ritual could be comprised of none, just a few, or perhaps even most of the sub rituals described above. This is diagrammatically represented in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Game Day Sub-rituals



Simply asking attendees at sporting events if they ever perform these sub-rituals, however, is problematic. The frequent attendees are afforded more opportunities to perform the rituals, which could potentially bias the ritual-attendance relationship – almost a mere exposure (Zajonc 1968) effect. To combat this, a two part "game day frequency" scale was devised. Respondents are asked first if they have ever performed the ritual on game day, and then asked how often. An example is provided below in Figure 18 below.

Figure 18: Game Day Frequency Example

Ritual On game day as a spectator have you ever……		**If you answered "Yes", how often did you perform this ritual while attending a game?**				
		Only Once	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Every Game
Painted or decorated any part of your body with team colours.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5

This method of enquiring as to ritual behaviour avoids the potential for mere exposure bias described above while providing an ordinal measure of game day ritual frequency. The five point scale used in the ritual portion of the questionnaire came from pre-tests. Each data point needed to be labelled because it had to be *game-day* frequency and not frequency alone as this may have caused bias towards those frequent attendees. Five labels were constructed for the five point scale as qualitative tests showed that seven labels for this scale was too complicated.

Reflective vs. Formative Indicators

An important question to consider when creating a measurement scale to be analysed using structural equation modelling, is whether the measurement indicators are reflective or formative. Reflective indicators are those where the direction of causality is from construct to measure, and the reverse is true for formative indicators. Two brief examples will illustrate the difference. First, the latent construct Socioeconomic Status (SES) has formative indicators because the construct is caused by the measures. Measures such as parents' income and occupation are used to calculate SES. Changes in SES do not cause changes in income, it is the other way around. The second examples uses the latent construct Optimism, which has reflective indicators as a comparison. Changes in the construct cause changes in the measures – those people who are more optimistic are more likely to enjoy the company of friends, not the other way around.

Jarvis Mackenzie and Podsakoff (2003) list four questions that help categorise indicators as either reflective or formative:

- What is the direction of causality?
- Do the indicators share a common theme?
- Are the indicators expected to co-vary?

- Can you drop an indicator without changing the conceptual domain of the construct?

Answering these four questions revealed the ritual construct to have reflective indicators. The direction of causality is from construct to measure, the indicators share a common theme and are expected to co-vary, and dropping one of the indicators does not alter the overall concept of the construct.

Purifying the Measure

Pre-test questionnaires were distributed and collected in two student classes at different Australian universities. One sample (n=112) came from an undergraduate level Marketing class, and the other (n=41) came from a postgraduate class in Sport Management giving a combined sample size of 153.

For each of the 18 sub-rituals, the students were asked three questions:

1. On those days when you attend a sporting event (as a spectator), how often do you perform this ritual?
2. If you perform this ritual, how much do you enjoy it?

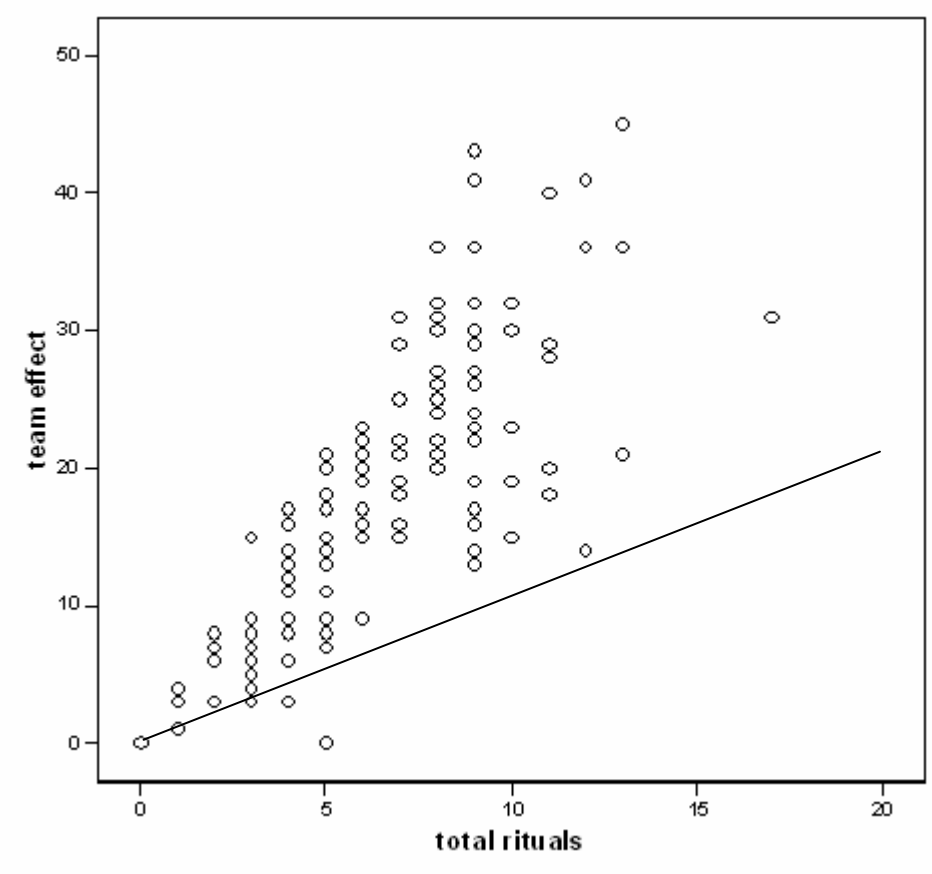
3. If you perform this ritual, please indicate how effective you believe it is for helping your team win.

Finally, the students were asked an open-ended question "Please describe any other social activities you engage in either before, during or immediately after attending a game as a spectator" in an attempt to generate other rituals not listed. The full pre-test #1 questionnaire is provided in the Appendix A.

Construct validity requires verifying that these 18 items indeed measure ritual. To accomplish this superstition was used a complementary construct. As stated earlier in the literature review, the repeat nature and formality of superstitious behaviour dictates that if respondents are behaving superstitiously, then they are also exhibiting ritualistic behaviour. Superstition is a sub-set of ritual, so if superstition is found, so is ritual. The third question (above) linked the respondent's game day behaviour with superstition and was derived from Buhrmann, Brown and Zaugg's (1982) study of the superstitious beliefs of basketball players.

The result of a scatterplot (Figure 19) shows that since superstition exists in the sample, ritual is present as well. The total number of rituals students performed was plotted against the perceived effectiveness of the rituals, each being measured on a 5 point scale (1, not at all effective – 5, very effective). If students believed their rituals had no effect on their team winning, the points should be clustered around the straight line. Almost all data points, however, are above the line, and increasing with distance from the line as more rituals are performed.

Figure 19: Scatterplot of Ritual and Superstition



Granted, some of the sub-rituals may indeed have a beneficial effect on a team's performance, such as wearing team colours or singing the club song. However other sub-rituals, such as wearing a lucky charm or attending a social event after the game, can have no effect on team performance and constitute superstitious behaviours.

Some other results from pre-test #1:

- The most popular game day sub-ritual was wearing team colours (73.2% had performed this at least once) closely followed by singing the club song (70.6%).
- The order is reversed for the most effective ritual. Singing the club song was perceived by fans to be most effective with a mean of 2.8 (1, not al all effective – 5, very effective) followed by wearing the team colours with a mean of 2.6.
- Not surprisingly, the perceived least effective ritual was fighting with other members of the crowd with a mean of 0.05.
- Only 6.5% of respondents had ever prayed in a group setting for team success. The individual and group pray categories are combined into an overall pray item for the main data collection.
- The pre-game meal sub-ritual was removed from the scale. Respondents were unsure how important it was to eat the same exact meal, and also unsure when the pre-game meal was to be

eaten (directly before a game, the previous day etc). The social event sub-ritual takes into account meals eaten directly before the game, so the pre-game meal item is unnecessary.

The amended list of sub-rituals that comprise the game day ritual is provided below in Table 7.

Table 7: List of Game Day Sub-rituals

	Sub-rituals
1	Paint/decorate body
2	Make/buy sign
3	Purchase team merchandise
4	Wear team colours
5	Wear any part of official uniform
6	Sing team song/national anthem
7	Social event/tailgate
8	Argue with/shout at attendees
9	Argue with/shout at players
10	Argue with/shout at umpires
11	Participate at halftime/fulltime
12	Expose part of your body you normally would not
13	Physically fight with other attendees
14	Wear a visible lucky charm
15	Wear a lucky charm that cannot be seen
16	Pray for team success

Behavioural Loyalty Scale

As indicated earlier in this thesis, there are many ways to measure behavioural loyalty such as duration (for how long has the consumer been

purchasing), retention, purchase sequence, proportion of purchase to one brand and others. Because it directly and indirectly drives much of the overall revenue for sports teams, in sports, the important measure of behavioural loyalty is attendance. Respondents were asked to indicate the total number of AFL games attended in 2003 as well as 2004.

Second Pre-test of the Questionnaire

The modified questionnaire was pre-tested for a second time on 39 respondents at a Fremantle Dockers home game against the North Melbourne Kangaroos at Subiaco Oval on Saturday, July 17, 2004. Questionnaires were distributed to attendees seated in section 332 before the game started. Once completed, the researcher collected the questionnaires, gave the respondents a hat as thanks, de-briefed the respondents and asked further questions about the survey instrument. None of the pre-test respondents indicated they had any problems with the wording of the questionnaire, and all questionnaires were completed within 12 minutes. Nine respondents indicated they found some of the questions repetitive, and they were assured by the researcher this was intentional.

This second pre-test required no further changes to the final survey instrument, which is attached in Appendix B.

Collecting Data

While student samples can sometimes suffice, to get a true test of the motivation (Trail & James, 2001), identification, commitment and ritual scales, real fans are needed. This research used responses from attendees at an AFL game. Also, when developing a psychometric scale, it is preferable to collect a large enough sample to perform both exploratory and confirmatory analyses (Churchill, 1979; Nunnally, 1978).

The Football Club

The Fremantle Football Club (FFC), known as the Fremantle Dockers, entered the Australian Football League as an expansion team in the 1995 season as the second team based in Western Australia. Fremantle has a rich football history with East Fremantle and South Fremantle serving as strong and successful teams in the WAFL state league. The management of the FFC kindly provided game-day access to the stadium for the author and field researchers for a pre-test and data collection.

In their first ten seasons, the Dockers only made the finals once, in 2003. A summary of season wins, membership numbers and average attendances are provided in Table 8.

Table 8: Fremantle Results 1995-2004

Year	Membership	Finishing position (out of 16)	Average home attendance
1995	18,456	13th	23,286
1996	19,622	13th	22,113
1997	19,949	12th	22,025
1998	22,186	15th	22,780
1999	24,896	15th	23,869
2000	24,925	12th	22,405
2001	23,898	16th	21,258
2002	23,775	13th	26,358
2003	25,368	5th	30,680
2004	32,780	9th	36,261

At the point of data collection in the 2004 season, the team had nine wins, seven losses and were in a position to play finals football should their form continue.

Procedure

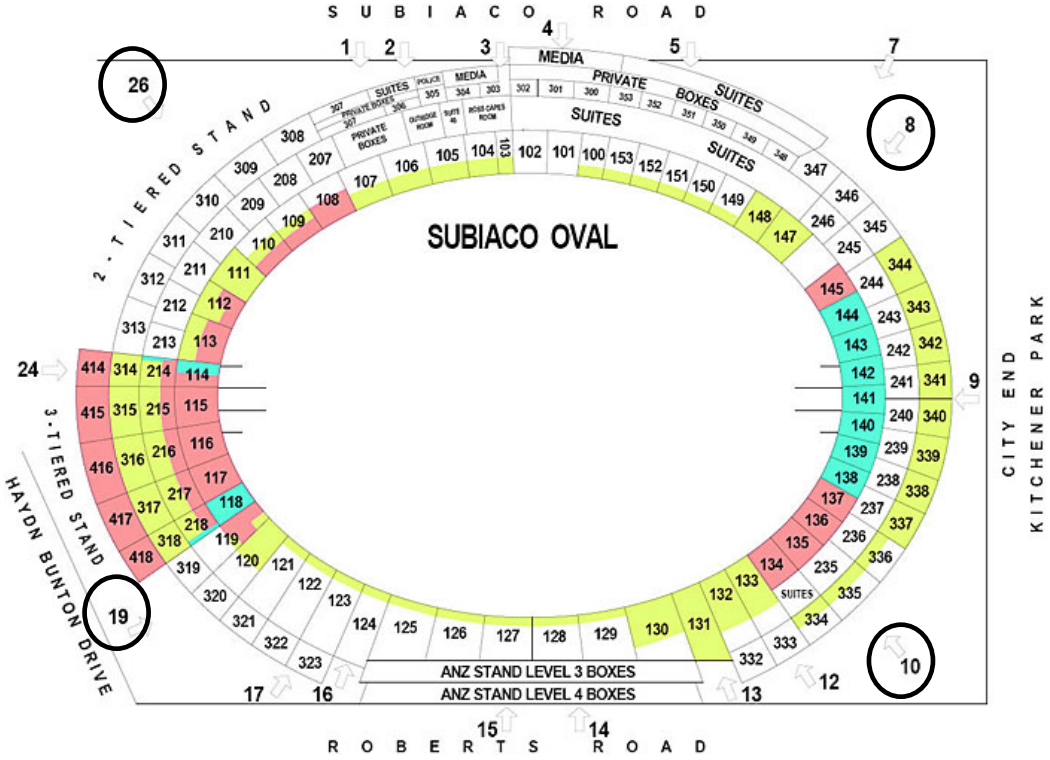
Data were collected at a Fremantle Dockers home game at Subiaco Oval on July 24, 2004. A total of eight research assistants were stationed just inside gates 8, 10, 19 and 26 from one hour before bounce-down until the three-quarter time break. See Figure 20 for circled gate locations.

The gates were roughly equidistant from each other in an attempt to gather data from both members and non-members of the Fremantle Football Club.

The research assistants handed out 820 self-completed paper questionnaires to patrons as they entered the stadium.

To randomise the sample, the assistants were instructed to approach every fourth individual or group, with further instructions not to give the questionnaire to more than one person in any group. The respondents could either complete the questionnaire on the spot, or return the questionnaire to the same location before the end of the three-quarter time break. A total of 651 completed questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 79%. This response, from a game day attendance of 35,037 corresponds to 1.8% of the overall crowd. A small incentive (hat or cap in team colours) was given to respondents as they returned their completed questionnaire to the research assistant. The number of refusals was low.

Figure 20: Gate and Seating Location at Subiaco Oval



Describing the Sample

Demographics

The sample was 55% male, with an average age of 38.1 years. The gender split of the sample compares favourably with the overall gender split of AFL games in Perth of 57.6% (Megalogenis, 2004). The mean number of games attended was 6.5 out of a possible total of 10 home games to that point in the season. Approximately 61% were members of the Fremantle Football Club, and of those members, 94% purchased season tickets. The Fremantle Football Club reports that during most home games, 65-70% of

the attendees are Fremantle members. These figures indicate that the sample is representative of the attendee population.

Most attendees (86%) live within 60 kilometres of Subiaco Oval – the ground where Fremantle plays its home games. Sixty-four percent of all respondents attended in groups of two to four persons, while 5.3% reported coming to the game alone. The average group size was 4.12 people. Forty-three percent of those sampled first started attending football games aged 10 or younger, while 73% began attending games before they turned 21. One quarter of those surveyed listed poor weather as the biggest obstacle to attendance. Ticket cost was listed as the next highest preventative factor. The "city in which you live" was a standout as the strongest influence to choosing a favourite team. Other strong influencers are fathers, friends, spouses and siblings.

Rituals

Ninety seven percent of attendees report performing some kind of ritual on game day. Wearing team colours to a game is the most frequent ritual performed with 86% of respondents reporting they had performed this ritual at least once on game day. Singing the club song (80%) closely

follows along with purchasing team merchandise (62%) and shouting at the umpires (60%).

Twenty-two percent of respondents report individually praying for team success while only 2.5% of respondents report ever having a physical fight with other attendees on game day, and 4.5% report exposing parts of their body that they would normally keep covered.

Some exploratory questions worth asking: What makes a person ritualistic – is it the number of rituals performed, the type of ritual that is performed or how often each ritual is performed? Perhaps as Bleak and Frederick (1998) conclude when researching the ritualistic behaviour of athletes, the specific rituals performed are important rather than the total use of rituals.

Chapter 5: Analysis

Introduction

After the data were cleaned, the first two sets of analyses were performed on the entire sample to investigate the underlying constructs of motivation to attend games, and habit. Then the dataset was split to accommodate both exploratory and confirmatory analysis on the Fan Ritual scale, and to test the overall model.

Cleaning the Data

Data cleaning is a mixture of judgement and process to arrive at a dataset that can be used with multiple analyses. The initial dataset comprised responses from 651 attendees, although not all responses were complete, and it was clear a handful of spectators completed a questionnaire simply to receive the incentive.

From the initial dataset the researcher checked outliers and the following is an example of the adjustments made:

- Removed ID# 268 as they had a 7 response for every question.
- Removed ID# 96 as it was 90% empty.

- ID# 238 incorrectly had 40 as the intended number of games attended next year. This was checked with the original questionnaire and changed to 10.
- ID# 643 also had attendance incorrectly entered as 10 and was changed to 1.
- Removed ID#s 49, 372, 102, 370, 237, 393 as they all had more than 15 missing variables.

Also, with the attendance data, since the questionnaires were administered towards the end of the 2004 season, the number of possible attended games in each season was different. To account for the differences, the scores for 2003 and 2004 attendance were standardised for each respondent.

The result of data cleaning was an accurate and mostly complete dataset of 643 responses.

Analysing Motivation

To rule the construct of motivation out of the final model, the next step is to examine its relationship with attitudinal loyalty and attendance. The means, standard deviations, and consistency measures for each individual difference factor, attitudinal loyalty and attendance are displayed in Table 9. As expected when surveying predominantly home team fans on game

day, the means for the motivational constructs are almost universally high. Even amongst these fans however, there are variances in levels and types of motivations, and it is these differences that are the subject of this study. The means for each construct ranged from 2.9 for Player Interest to 6.3 for Team Interest. Standard deviations ranged from 0.86 for Excitement to 1.64 for Family Bonding.

Table 9: Sport Interest Inventory Construct Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Average Variance Extracted

SII Constructs	Mean	SD	α	Avg Variance Extracted *
Vicarious Achievement	5.6	1.32	.82	.63
Team Interest	6.3	1.01	.81	.61
Player Interest	2.9	1.35	.67	.43
Excitement	6.3	0.86	.77	.55
Escape	4.8	1.63	.88	.71
Drama	5.5	1.27	.72	.48
Socialization	4.8	1.29	.76	.54
Family Bonding	4.8	1.64	.88	.72
Friends Bonding	5.2	1.28	.79	.56
Entertainment Value	5.0	1.56	.92	.79
Role Model	5.5	1.32	.87	.69

* Calculated from the average of the squared multiple correlation coefficient for the three items used to measure each construct

The internal consistency measures for each antecedent ranged from Cronbach's $\alpha = .67$ to $\alpha = .92$, with all but PLA above the generally accepted lowere limit of 0.7 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Inspection of the correlation matrix (see Table 10) revealed moderate correlations between the 11 constructs, with the correlation of 0.72 between

PLA and EXC approaching the threshold for multicollinearity . Therefore, an additional test of discriminant validity was conducted and revealed that the average variance extracted by each of the three items representing a construct exceeded the squared correlation between each antecedent (Fornell & Larkner, 1981). The results provide evidence that the SII constructs are unique from one another. The correlation between attitudinal loyalty and attendance r = .22 was significant p < .01 indicating a positive but relatively weak relationship.

Table 10: Correlation Matrix of Sport Interest Inventory[2]

	PLA	VIC	EXC	ESC	DRA	SOC	FAM	BON	ROL	TEM	VAL	ALL	BEH
PLA	1												
VIC	.12	1											
EXC	-.08	.63	1										
ESC	.30	.28	.27	1									
DRA	.16	.08	.27	.17	1								
SOC	.18	.42	.42	.34	.13	1							
FAM	.27	.26	.26	.45	.08	.44	1						
BON	.23	.27	.34	.39	.09	.65	.40	1					
ROL	.10	.61	.59	.22	.18	.40	.34	.33	1				
TEM	-.35	.51	.72	.09	.10	.29	.17	.17	.45	1			
VAL	.17	.31	.39	.19	.06	.33	.17	.24	.38	.22	1		
ALL												1	
BEH												.22	1

[2] PLA = Player Interest, VIC= Vicarious Achievement, EXC = Excitement, ESC = Escape, DRA = Drama, SOC = Socialise, FAM = Bond with Family, BON = Bond with Friends, ROL = Role Model, TEM = Team Interest, VAL = Value for Money, ALL = Attitudinal Loyalty, BEH = Behavioural Loyalty

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1999) to examine the psychometric properties of the SII consisting of 33 scale items and 11 constructs. A covariance matrix taken from these respondents was used as the input data (N = 643). The error terms for all 33 observed variables were constrained to not correlate while the 11 latent variables were left to freely correlate. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis revealed the SII achieved a good fit for the data. The parameter estimates and the accompanying t test of significance for the relationship between each scale item and its respective construct were significant at $p < .01$. The factor loadings ranged from a low of $r = .57$ to a high of $r = .88$ with seven of the items below the $r = .70$ benchmark. The average variance extracted for each construct ranged from .43 to .79 with over 61% of the variance in the 11 constructs accounted for by the 33 scale items. The two constructs failing to extract more than the recommended 50% of the variance were Player Interest (0.43) and Drama (0.48).

Inspection of the fit indices indicated that the data supported the hypothesized measurement model. The RMSEA value of .06 was below the recommended .06 cut-off and in acceptable range of .05 to .08 for a close fitting model (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The SMRM (.06) was below the recommend .08 cut-off indicating a good fit

(Hair et al., 1998; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 1998). Based upon these results of the confirmatory factor analysis, the psychometric properties of the SII were confirmed and provided a close fit for the data collected.

Multiple linear regression analysis was next used to examine the link between SII individual factors and both attitudinal loyalty and attendance. The regression model is displayed in Table 11 and indicates that 52.5% of the variance in the level of attitudinal loyalty is explained by the following factors: TEM, VIC, EXC and PLA ($F = 54.27$, $df = 552$, $p < 0.05$). The β coefficients indicate the strongest relationship to loyalty was TEM ($\beta = 0.53$), distantly followed by VIC ($\beta = 0.16$), EXC ($\beta = 0.11$) and PLA ($\beta = -0.07$). The negative coefficient of PLA indicates an inverse relationship with the level of attitudinal loyalty.

Table 11: Regression Analysis for Attitudinal Loyalty and Game Attendance on Sport Interest Inventory Factors

Factor	Attitudinal Loyalty Beta	Game Attendance Beta
Player Interest (PLA)	**-.07**	**-.09**
Vicarious Achievement (VIC)	**.16**	**.13**
Excitement (EXC)	**.11**	-.03
Escape (ESC)	-.03	.04
Drama (DRA)	-.05	**-.20**
Family Bonding (FAM)	-.01	-.01
Socialization (SOC)	.01	**.24**
Role Model (ROL)	.01	-.03
Friends Bonding (BON)	.01	-.07
Team Interest (TEM)	**.53**	.09
Entertainment Value (VAL)	.04	**.17**

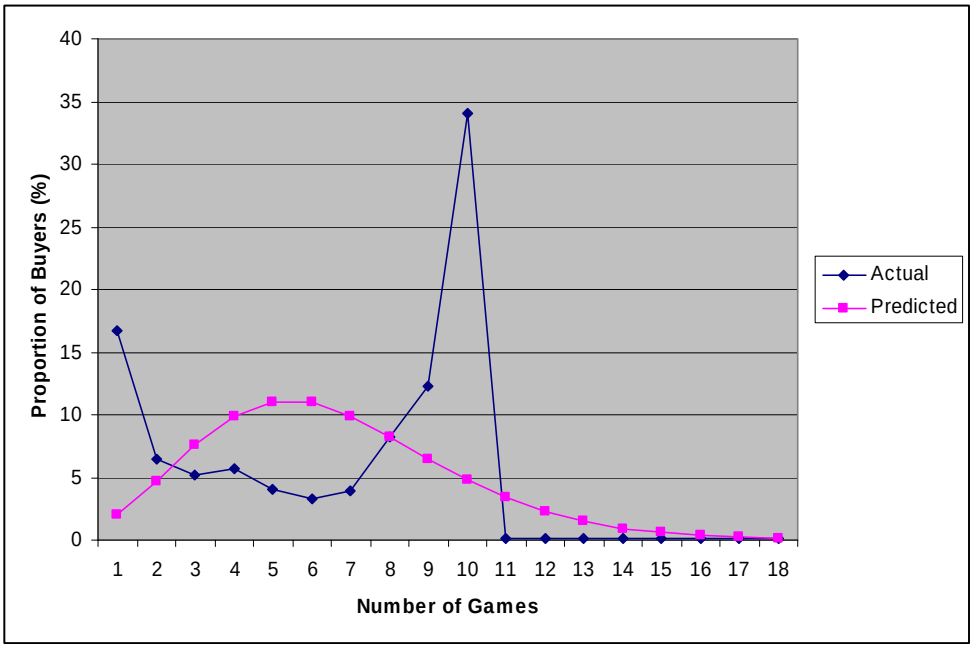
* Bold are significant at ($p < 0.05$)

The SII was able to explain 18.6% of the variance in attendance from the following significant factors: PLA, VIC, DRA, SOC and VAL ($F = 11.36$, $df = 556$, $p < 0.05$). The strongest positive association with attendance was SOC ($\beta = 0.24$), followed by VAL ($\beta = 0.17$), and VIC ($\beta = 0.13$). The factors of DRA ($\beta = -0.20$) and PLA ($\beta = -0.09$) were negatively associated with attendance levels. Socialization (SOC), the factor with the strongest positive beta coefficient of 0.24, was only slightly stronger than drama (DRA) with a negative beta of -0.20.

Analysing Habit and the NBD

To test this hypothesis, attendance data from 2004 was analysed and compared with NBD predictions. The mean number of games attended in 2004 was 6.52. Entering this into Malcolm Wright's NBDNORMS Version 0.1 spreadsheet with a penetration rate of 99.5% (does not allow for 100% penetration) provides a comparison of actual and predicted attendance as shown in Figure 21. Visually there appears to be a difference, but further analysis is needed.

Figure 21: NBD Prediction Compared with 2004 Actual Attendance



Two statistical tests were used to analyse the data; a correlation analysis and a chi-square t-test. The correlation coefficient is low ($r = 0.257$) and not significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. This indicates a weak correlation between the actual and predicted values.

Additionally, the chi-square test ($X^2 = 2581.1$, 17 *df*) is significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating there is a significant difference between observed attendance, and the predicted NBD attendance. This lends support for hypothesis H2.

The process for examining the rest of the data involved splitting the dataset, performing exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, generating one-factor congeneric models for each of the remaining constructs and then analysing all of the constructs and their interrelationships using structural equation modelling (SEM).

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The overall dataset was randomly split to accommodate both exploratory and confirmatory analyses, leaving two datasets each with over 300 cases. The two SPSS datasets were labelled *explore.sav* (N=315) and *confirm.sav* (N=328). Exploratory factor analysis was performed on *explore.sav* to detect the underlying structure in the set of variables measuring fan ritual.

Explore.sav

The set of 16 sub-rituals identified earlier in Table 7 begins the data summary and reduction process. To maintain the integrity of the analysis and underlying structure, the researcher removed those variables where less than 5% of attendees reported performing the sub-rituals at least once. Only 4.5% of attendees reported ever exposing their body while at a game, and only 2.5% reported fighting with other attendees, so these two variables were removed from the list.

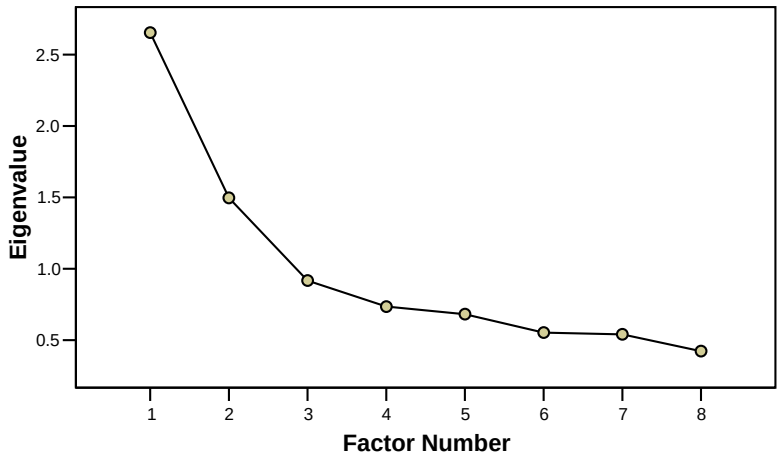
Additionally, the three variables that measured arguing at a game (arguing with umpires, players or other attendees) were removed. Arguing was deemed to be too simplistic (i.e. not requiring multiple behaviours) and non-sequential, and subsequent reflection revealed they did not fit the definition of ritual, and should not have been included in the initial list. To contrast with another simple activity, praying has a beginning, middle and end.

A very high correlation between wearing the team uniform and wearing team colours, which was expected, led to the removal of the uniform variable as it was unnecessary in the analysis. Given the ritual construct has reflective indicators, low communalities (below 0.2) required removing two further variables (attending a social event and participating in the sport at half-time) which left a list of eight sub-rituals.

Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed nine correlations above 0.3, which along with a significant Bartlett test of sphericity ($X^2 = 455.7$, 28 *df*, $p<0.001$) and a KMO measure of sampling adequacy of 0.731 indicates sufficient correlations exist in the dataset to validate applying factor analysis (Hair et al., 2006).

Principal axis factoring was used along with Direct Oblimin rotation. Direct Oblimin is the rotation technique best suited to obtaining multiple factors with theoretically correlated constructs (Hair et al., 2006). The scree plot indicates two underlying factors with Eigenvalues over 1 and shown in Figure 22 below:

Figure 22: Scree Plot of Sub-ritual Factors



The pattern matrix indicates the dimensions of this two-factor structure as shown in Table 12 and explains 52% of the variance in the data.

Table 12: Pattern Matrix Structure[3]

	Factor 1	**Factor 2**
Sing Team Song	0.685	
Wear Team Colours	0.667	
Buy Merchandise	0.586	
Make Sign	0.529	
Paint Face/Body	0.470	
Wear Visible Lucky Charm		0.659
Wear Non-visible Lucky Charm		0.636
Pray for Team Success		0.542

The first five sub-rituals representing factor 1 are all observable, social rituals that involve many participants or observants, while the remaining three sub-rituals are personal, and tend to be more private. Therefore, factor 1 is labelled Social Ritual, and factor 2 as Personal Ritual. The items belonging to each factor are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Social and Personal Ritual Items

Factor 1 - Social Ritual	**Factor 2 - Personal Ritual**
Sing team song/national anthem	Wear a visible lucky charm
Wear team colours	Wear a lucky charm that cannot be seen
Purchase team merchandise	Pray for team success
Make/buy sign	
Paint/decorate body	

[3] Values below 0.3 in the pattern matrix were suppressed for clarity. Extraction method Principal Axis with Direct Oblimin rotation.

The next step was to validate these factors using confirmatory factor analysis in SEM with the dataset *confirm.sav*.

Confirm.sav

Factors resulting from using exploratory factor analysis are derived by statistical results rather than theory (Hair et al., 2006). Confirmatory analysis is now needed to see if the statistical model of ritual fits with the theory. Confirmatory analysis will also be used to check previously validated scales for commitment, identification and behavioural loyalty. This part of the study used the Analysis of Moment Structures AMOS (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999) software package to confirm the results of the exploratory factor analysis.

Replacing Missing Data

SEM does not deal well with missing data points in the dataset (specifically AMOS is unable to calculate modification indices with any missing data), so cases with missing data should be removed or the missing data should be estimated and replaced. For this study, it was preferable to replace data rather than remove cases because the data set was split to explore on one half, and confirm with the other.

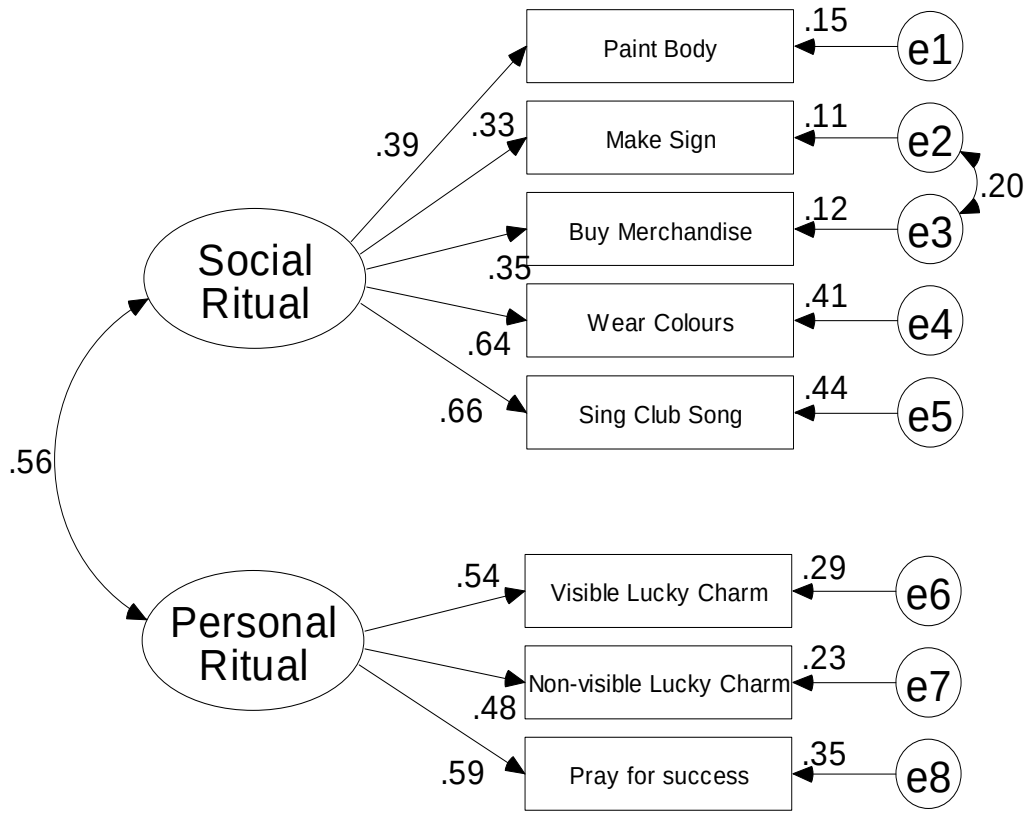
There are several methods of dealing with missing data including mean value replacement, pairwise deletion, listwise deletion and maximum likelihood estimation. Rubin (1976) argues that missing data can be replaced with unbiased estimates if the data is missing completely at random (MCAR). Rather than removing cases with missing data, the best method of estimating missing data is Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML), which yields the least bias in the missing data (Arbuckle, 1996; Enders & Bandalos, 2001). For example, Byrne (2001) used the maximum likelihood imputation method with a complete and incomplete dataset. She found this method could replace up to 25% missing data and still yield comparable chi-square and fit measures with the complete dataset.

In the *confirm.sav* data file, any cases with more than 25% missing variables were removed earlier in the data cleaning procedure, so all that remained was to calculate if the missing data is systematic or MCAR. Little's MCAR test in SPSS revealed a non-significant value (X^2 = 1661.639, *df* = 1528, p = .009) which indicates the missing data is MCAR, and can be replaced using FIML.

Fan Ritual Scale CFA

The items found in the exploratory analysis were entered into the measurement model seen below in Figure 23.

Figure 23: CFA Model for Fan Ritual



Inspecting the modification indices revealed that error terms e2 and e3 should be co-varied to find a better fit for the model. Normally error terms should only be co-varied when it can be explained using theory. In this

case the error terms relate to two items – making/bringing a sign and buying team merchandise. It is plausible to explain that attendees were somewhat confused between these two items as they could have brought a sign from home that they had purchased previously from the team store. It is reasonable to believe that these error terms can be co-varied.

The model was not significant and the other goodness-of-fit indicators in Table 14 show the model to be a good fit for the data (Hair et al., 2006; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schermelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003).

Table 14: Fit Indicators for Fan Ritual CFA

Fit Indicators	Value
Chi-square	28.22
Degrees of Freedom	18
p	0.059
X^2/df	1.568
RMSEA (Confidence Interval)	0.042 (0.00-0.07)
GFI/AGFI	0.977/0.954
TLI	0.940
CFI	0.962
Std Residual Co-variances over 2.58	none

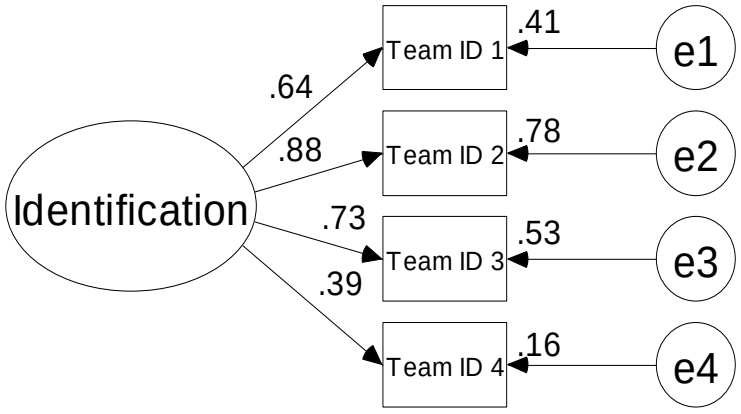
Tests for convergent validity showed mixed results. Reliability tests using Cronbach's Alpha revealed a value of 0.724 for the Social Ritual scale, and 0.640 for the Personal Ritual scale. While these results are somewhat low,

they are acceptable for exploratory work in the social sciences (Churchill, 1979; Nunnally, 1978). The factor loadings were all significant at $\alpha = 0.01$, but ranged from a low of $r = 0.33$ to a high of $r = 0.66$ with four of the items below the $r = 0.50$ rule of thumb (Hair et al., 2006).

Identification Scale Congeneric Model

To confirm the psychometric properties of the Identification scale, the four items were entered into a one-factor congeneric model shown below in Figure 24. A congeneric model is distinct from a parallel model. A parallel model treats each of the measures as an equally accurate indicator of the construct, while a congeneric model allows each indicator to contribute in varying degrees.

Figure 24: Congeneric Model for Identification



The fit indicators, shown in Table 15, signify a good fitting model with the data.

Table 15: Fit Indicators for Identification Congeneric

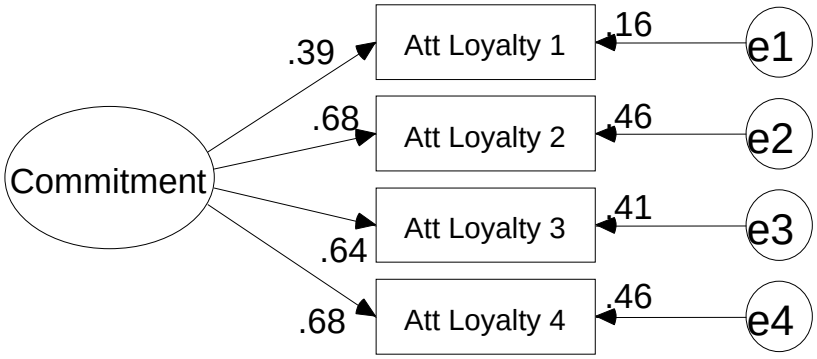
Fit Indicators	Value
Chi-square	0.486
Degrees of Freedom	2
p	0.784
X^2/df	0.243
RMSEA (Confidence Interval)	0.00 (0.00 – 0.072)
GFI/AGFI	0.999/0.996
TLI	1.013
CFI	1.000
Std Residual Co-variances over 2.58	none
Cronbach's Alpha	0.726

There is some overfit (Hair et al., 2006) with the normed chi-square value below 1.0, but this is common with one-factor models. The identification scale fits the data and can be used in the overall model.

Attitudinal Loyalty/Commitment Scale Congeneric Model

Similar analysis with the commitment scale revealed a model as shown below in Figure 25.

Figure 25: Congeneric Model for Commitment



Again, the fit indicators (in Table 16) show the modified PCT scale of fan commitment to a sporting team to fit well with the data collected from Australian football spectators. The only indicator outside the 'good fit' limit is the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.678, which might show the need for refining the Att Loyalty 1 item.

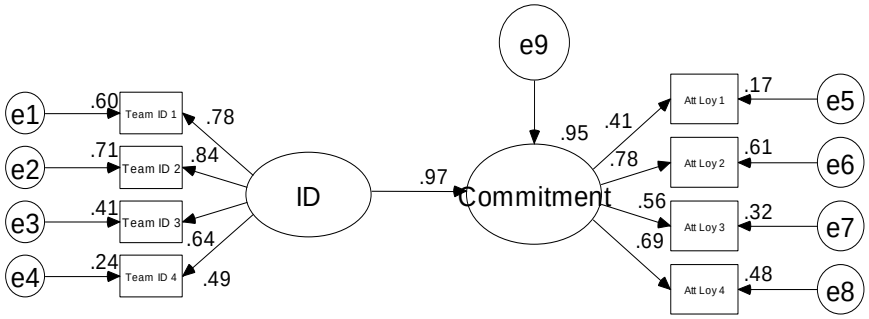
Table 16: Fit Indicators for Commitment Congeneric

Fit Indicators	Value
Chi-square	2.358
Degrees of Freedom	2
p	0.308
X^2/df	1.179
RMSEA (Confidence Interval)	0.024 (0.00 – 0.12)
GFI/AGFI	0.996/0.982
TLI	0.995
CFI	0.998
Std Residual Co-variances over 2.58	none
Cronbach's Alpha	0.678

Comparing Identification and Commitment

Having generated acceptable constructs for Team Identification and Commitment, the next step is to test whether these two constructs are essentially similar. A simple SEM was produced which linked the two constructs and is shown in Figure 26 below:

Figure 26: Comparing Identification and Commitment



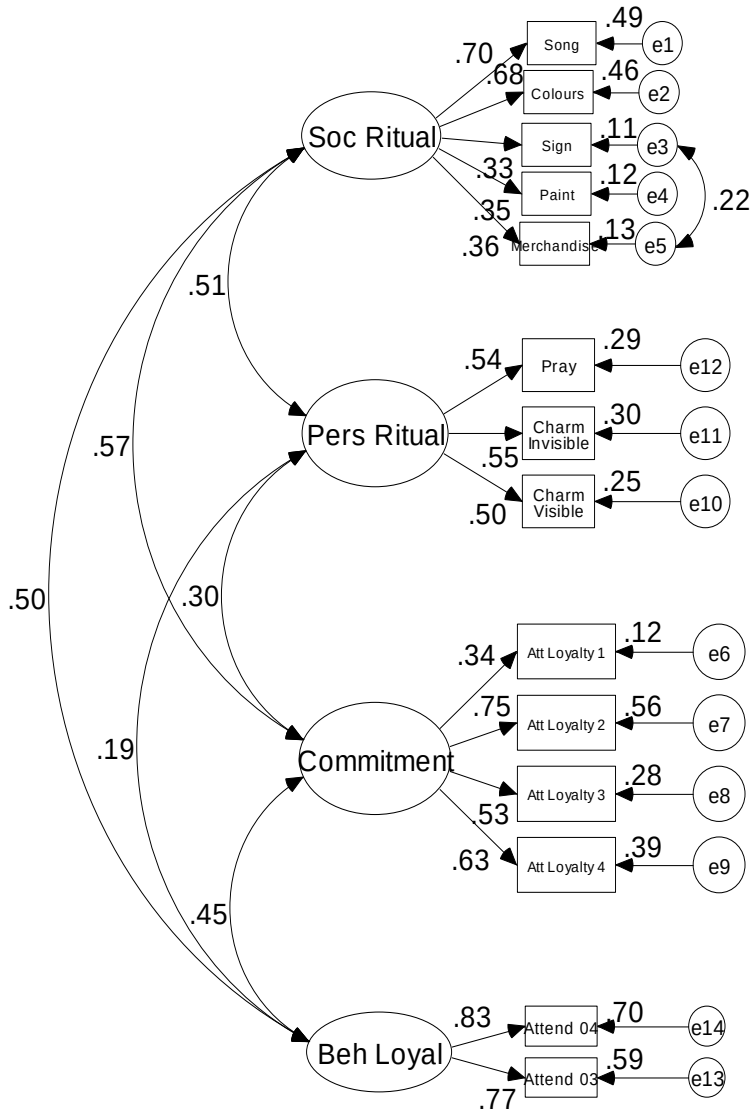
There is a standardised beta regression weight of 0.975 between the two constructs, and Identification explains 95% of the variance in Commitment. Clearly, these constructs are so similar they can be used interchangeably in these analyses, and both are not needed.

The Measurement Model

To test convergent and discriminant validity, all of the constructs from the one-factor congeneric models, along with their indicators are placed and tested in a full measurement model. Because SEM requires each construct

to have four indicators to be identified, the two-item Behavioural Loyalty scale could not be tested in a one-factor congeneric model. Instead Behavioural Loyalty is introduced in the measurement model and tested with other constructs. The full measurement model is shown in Figure 27.

Figure 27: Full Measurement Model



The fit indicators for the measurement model, shown in Table 17, reveal the model provides an acceptable to good fit for the data after correcting for non-normality using the Bollen-Stein p for significance.

Table 17: Fit Indicators for Measurement Model

Fit Indicators	Value
Chi-square	110.52
Degrees of Freedom	70
p (Bollen-Stein)	0.091
X^2/df	1.579
RMR (standardised)	0.438
RMSEA (Confidence Interval)	0.037 (0.02 – 0.05)
GFI/AGFI	0.964/0.945
TLI	0.947
CFI	0.959
Std Residual Co-variances over 2.58	one (3.130)

The check for discriminant validity (see Table 18) used the pattern and structure matrix method (Thompson, 1997). In this exercise, the pattern and structure coefficients for each construct are displayed in a grid format. Comparing the coefficients across each row, the coefficient for each construct (highlighted by bold) should be larger than any of the coefficients for the other constructs. Inspection of this matrix revealed the measurement model constructs have good discriminant validity.

Testing the Structural Models

Now that the measurement model is established, and found to be of acceptable fit, the hypothesised relationships between the constructs are

Table 18: Distinct Pattern and Structure Coefficients of Social Ritual, Personal Ritual, Commitment and Behavioural Loyalty Constructs

	Social Ritual		Personal Ritual		Commitment		Behavioural Loyalty	
	Pattern	Structure	Pattern	Structure	Pattern	Structure	Pattern	Structure
Social Ritual								
Song	**.70**	**.70**	-	.35	-	.39	-	.35
Colours	**.68**	**.68**	-	.21	-	.38	-	.34
Sign	**.33**	**.33**		.16		.18		.16
Paint	**.35**	**.35**	-	.18	-	.20	-	.17
Merchandise	**.36**	**.36**	-	.18	-	.20	-	.18
Personal Ritual								
Pray	-	.27	**.54**	**.54**	-	.16	-	.10
Charm Invisible	-	.29	**.55**	**.55**	-	.16	-	.10
Charm Visible	-	.25	**.50**	**.50**	-	.15	-	.09
Commitment								
Att Loyalty 1	-	.19	-	.10	**.34**	**.34**	-	.15
Att Loyalty 2	-	.42	-	.22	**.75**	**.75**	-	.33
Att Loyalty 3	-	.30	-	.16	**.53**	**.53**	-	.24
Att Loyalty 4	-	.36	-	.19	**.63**	**.63**	-	.28
Beh. Loyalty								
Attend 2004	-	.41	-	.16	-	.37	**.83**	**.83**
Attend 2003	-	.38	-	.14	-	.34	**.77**	**.77**

tested in competing structural models. First, however, it is necessary to test whether the overall model is identified, i.e. has enough 'known' information to be able to calculate 'unknown'. The *t*-Rule confirms a necessary condition of identification if:

$$t \leq \tfrac{1}{2} k(k+1)$$

where t is the number of free parameters to be estimated and k is the number of observed variables. In this model the number of free parameters is 34, and the number of observed variables is 14. Therefore

$$34 \leq \tfrac{1}{2} 14(14+1)$$

which is true, so the model satisfies the t-Rule for identification.

The three tested models with standardised regression weights are depicted in Figure 28, Figure 29 and Figure 30 on the following pages.

Figure 28: Proposed Structural Model A – Direct Effects

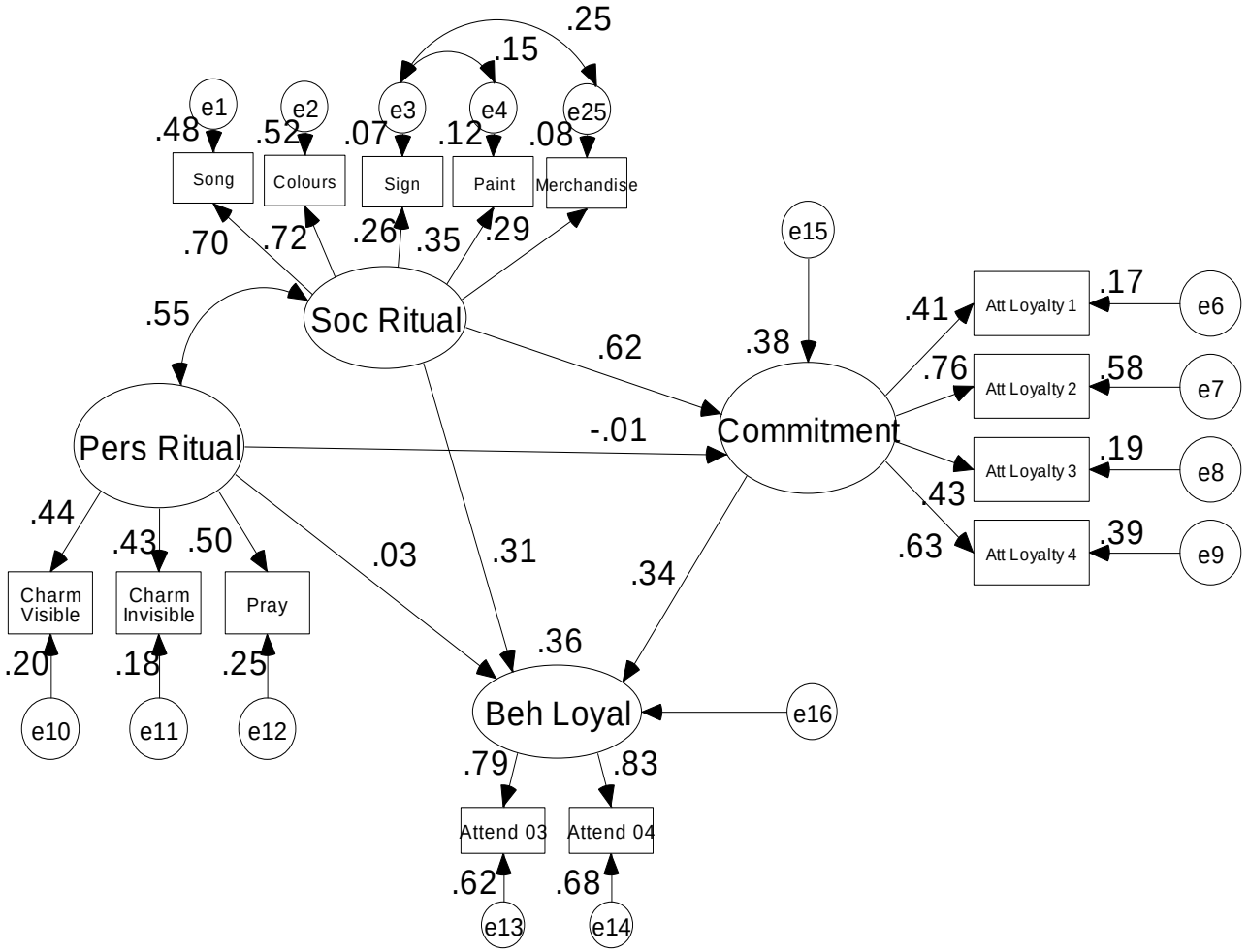


Figure 29: Alternate Structural Model B - Mediated

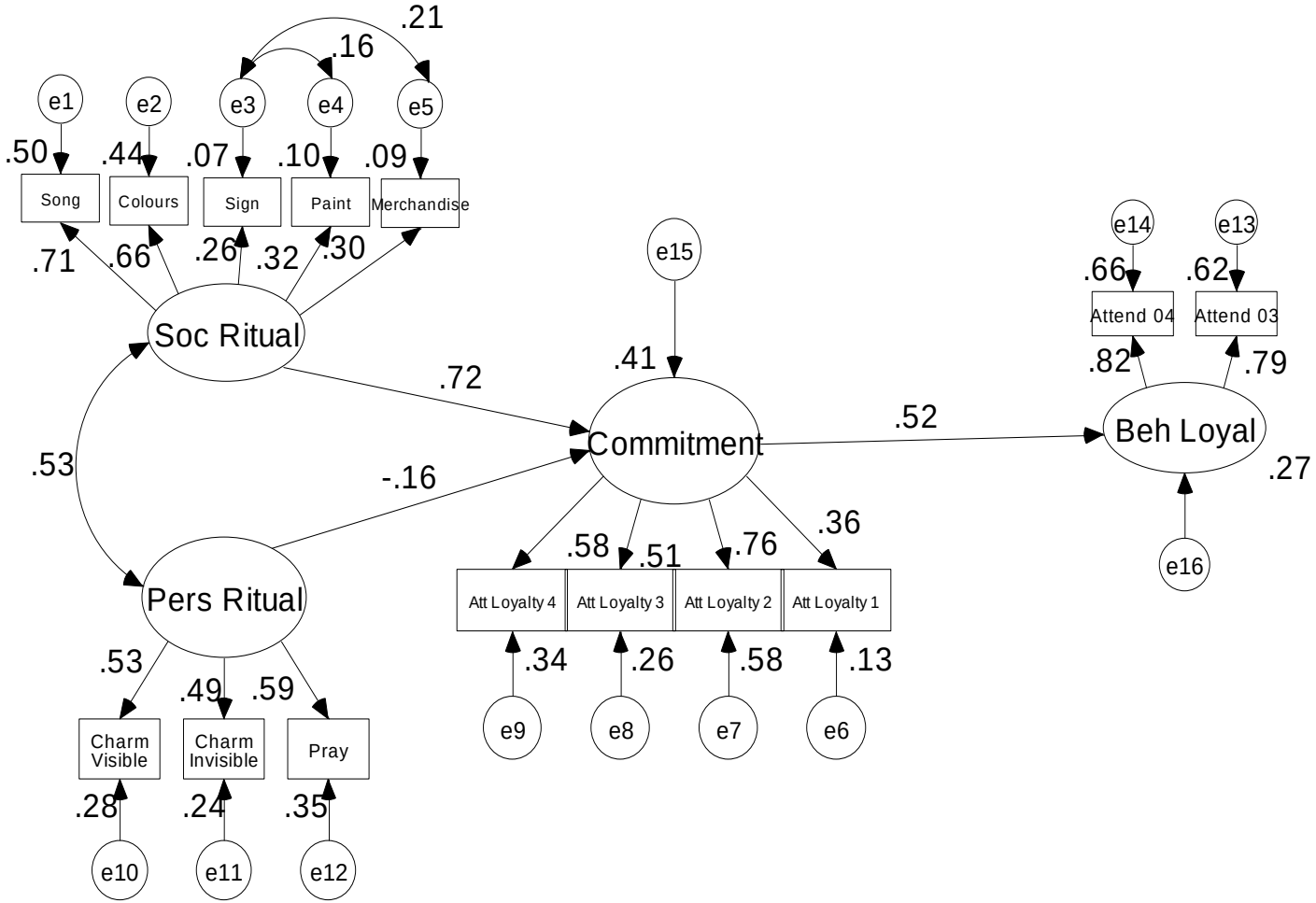


Figure 30: Alternate Structural Model C - Justification of Effort

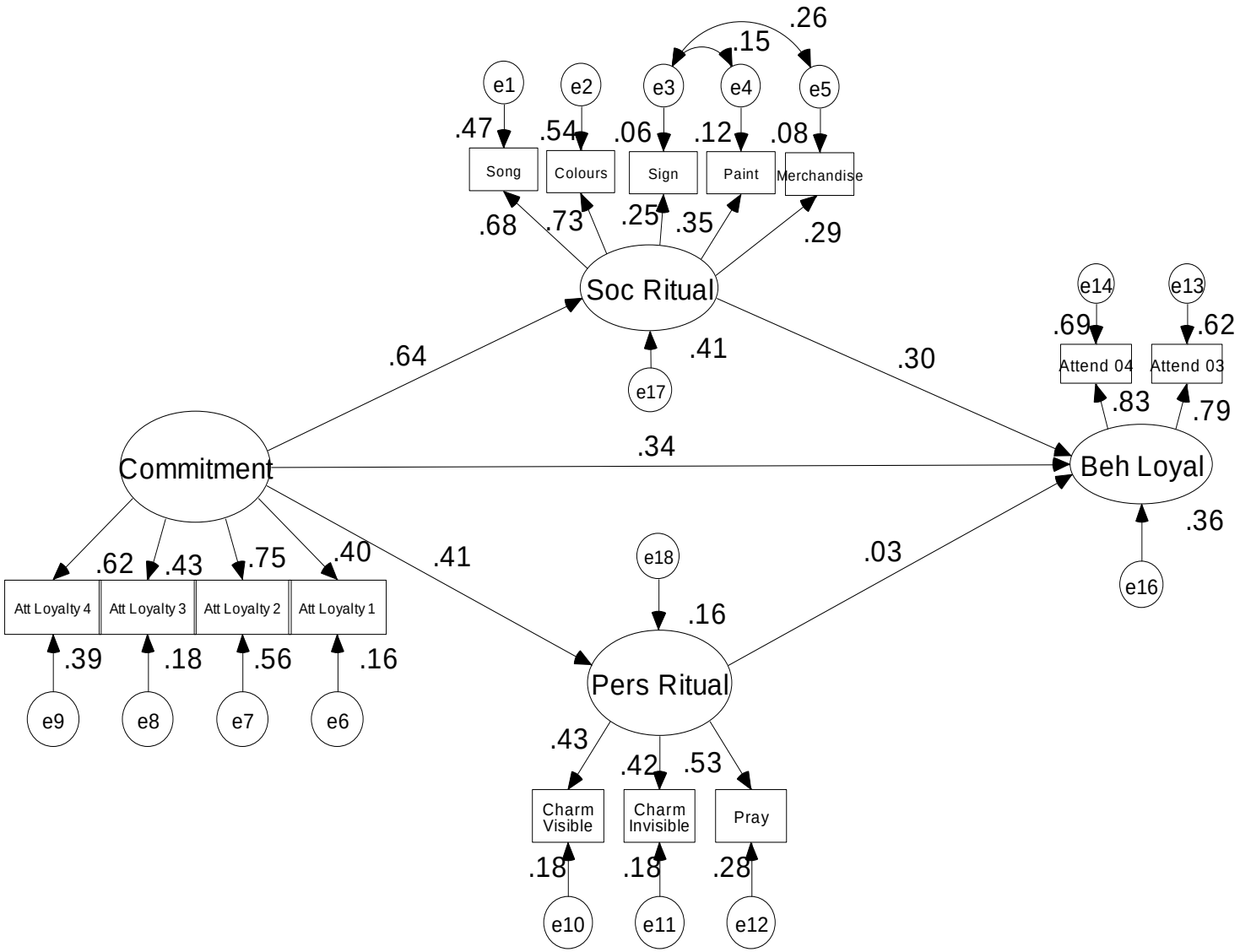


Table 19: Comparing Fit Indicators for Structural Models[4]

Fit Indicators	Proposed Model A, Direct Effects	Alternate Model B, Mediated	Alternate Model C, Justification of Effort
Chi-square	88.806	113.225	102.182
Degrees of Freedom	69	71	70
P (Bollen-Stein)	0.054	0.001	0.007
X^2/df	1.287	1.595	1.460
SRMR	0.046	0.056	0.054
RMSEA	0.031	0.043	0.04
GFI	0.959	0.951	0.953
TLI	0.962	0.927	0.939
CFI	0.971	0.943	0.953
Std Residual Co-variances over 2.58	none	1	none
CAIC	329.54	343.14	336.23

The fit indicators for the three structural models suggest the proposed model A (Direct Effects) provides the best fit for the data. It is the only model with a non-significant p value, has a lower chi-square value, higher values for GFI, CFI and TLI, and lower values for RMR and RMSEA than the other two models. The next best fitting model is C (Justification of Effort). To test if model A is significantly better than model C, a chi-square difference test is performed:

[4] GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, SRMR = Standardised Root Mean-square Residual, RMSEA = Root Mean-square of Error of Estimation, CAIC = Consistent Akaike Information Criterion

Alternate model C	$\chi 2 = 102.182$	df = 71
Proposed model A	$\chi 2 = 88.806$	df = 69
Difference	$\chi 2 = 13.376$	df = 2

Consulting a chi-square significance table, the critical value (p = 0.05) with two degrees of freedom is 5.99. Therefore, the calculated chi-square difference of 13.376 is above the critical value, signalling a significant difference between the two models.

Inspecting the Amos output of the chosen the Direct Effects model A shows the paths from Personal Ritual to both Commitment and Behavioural Loyalty are non-significant. Table 20 lists all of the regression weights, with the two non-significant paths highlighted.

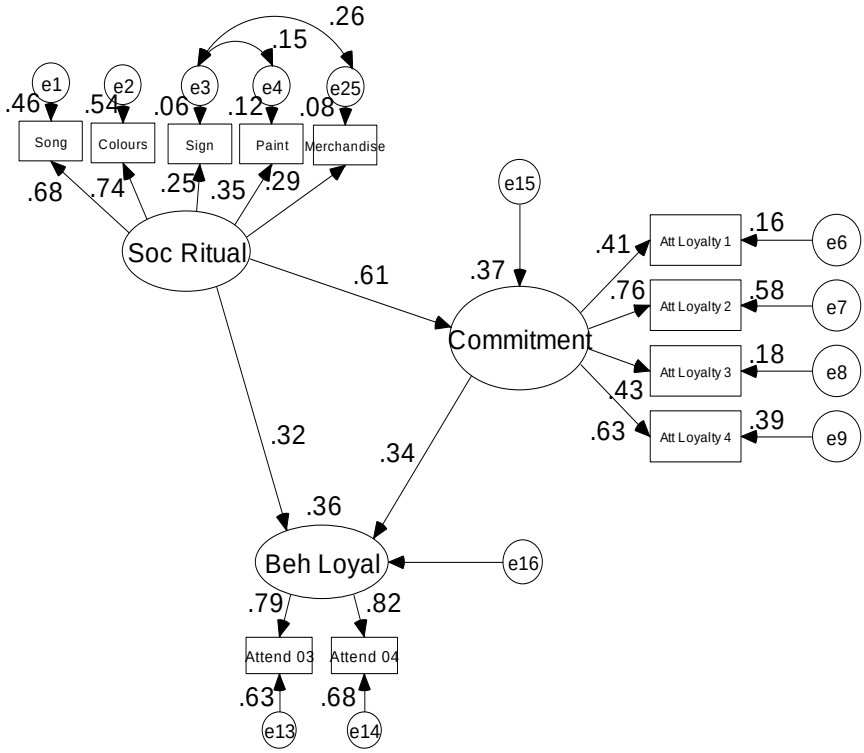
Table 20: Maximum Likelihood Regression Weights for Direct Effects Model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Commitment	<---	Soc Ritual	.264	.066	3.981	***
Commitment	**<---**	**Pers Ritual**	**-.013**	**.185**	**-.072**	**.943**
Beh Loyalty	<---	Commitment	.493	.168	2.940	.003
Beh Loyalty	<---	Soc Ritual	.190	.083	2.287	.022
Beh Loyalty	**<---**	**Pers Ritual**	**.052**	**.242**	**.216**	**.829**
SONG	<---	Soc Ritual	1.000			
COLOURS	<---	Soc Ritual	.971	.115	8.450	***
SIGN	<---	Soc Ritual	.322	.085	3.803	***
PAINT	<---	Soc Ritual	.301	.060	4.986	***
ATT LOY1	<---	Commitment	1.000			
ATT LOY2	<---	Commitment	1.732	.300	5.764	***
ATT LOY3	<---	Commitment	1.069	.226	4.737	***
ATT LOY4	<---	Commitment	.866	.155	5.582	***
MERCHAND	<---	Soc Ritual	.308	.075	4.132	***

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
PRAY	<---	Pers Ritual	1.000			
CHARM_BL	<---	Pers Ritual	1.076	.289	3.716	***
CHARM_SE	<---	Pers Ritual	1.177	.313	3.760	***
ATTEND2003	<---	Beh Loyal	.957	.108	8.866	***
ATTEND2004	<---	Beh Loyal	1.000			

In situations such as this, the non-significant pathways are generally removed, and the modified structural model re-tested. This un-hypothesised model D now only has three constructs; Social Ritual, Commitment and Behavioural Loyalty. The model along with standardised regression weights is depicted in Figure 31 below.

Figure 31: Un-hypothesised Model D



The fit indicators of this un-hypothesised model are compared below in Table 21 with those of the proposed Direct Effects model A.

Table 21: Comparing Proposed and Un-hypothesised Structural Models

Fit Indicators	**Proposed Model A Direct Effects**	**Un-Hypothesised Model D**
Chi-square	88.806	59.516
Degrees of Freedom	69	39
p (Bollen-Stein)	0.054	0.059
X^2/df	1.287	1.526
SRMR	0.046	0.052
RMSEA	0.031	0.043
GFI	0.959	0.954
TLI	0.962	0.927
CFI	0.971	0.967
Std Residual Co-variances over 2.58	none	none
CAIC	329.54	240.06

The indicators suggest mixed results as to which is the better fitting model. Model D has a higher SRMR and RMSEA values than model A, however model D also has a lower chi-square value with a normed chi-square (X^2/df) in the acceptable range between one and three. Since these models are not nested (contain the same constructs), it is not correct to perform a chi-square difference test

Which model should then be chosen? The un-hypothesised model D is the most parsimonious, and this generally suggests a more useful model. Simpler models are easier to replicate and employ, and are more likely to be true (Thompson, 1997). What is clear, from either model, is that Personal Rituals are not significantly effective in influencing attitudinal or behavioural loyalty. The proposed model A is useful for highlighting these non-significant relationships, while the un-hypothesised model D makes for easier understanding of the significant relationships.

Chapter 6: Results

Motivation Results

H1: *Motivation will have a stronger positive association with attitudinal loyalty than behavioural loyalty.*

The SII was able to explain 52.5% of the variance in attitudinal loyalty among AFL fans, while only 18.6% of the variance in game day attendance. What is of interest to sports marketers are the factors associated with these dependent variables, and the weights of their association. The overwhelming dominance of TEM (team interest) in the regression model means it could possibly stand as a proxy measure of attitudinal loyalty, leaving the other significant constructs redundant. However, the predictive capabilities of the model are strengthened when PLA (player interest), VIC (vicarious achievement) and EXC (excitement) are included. Unlike the association between motivation and attitudinal loyalty, there was no dominant factor in the relationship between motivation and attendance. This lends support to hypothesis H1.

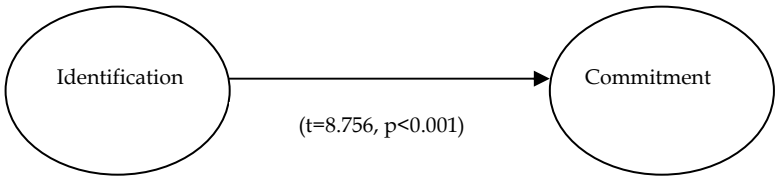
Comparing Attendance with the NBD

H2: *Attendance at AFL games does not follow the negative binomial distribution.*

Comparing actual attendance behaviour with the attendance predicted by the NBD revealed significant differences. A visual comparison of the purchase rates (see Figure 21) suggests the distributions are different, and a further two statistical tests were performed to confirm this. First, the correlation coefficient between the actual and predicted attendances is low ($r = 0.257$) and not significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. Second, the chi-square test ($X^2 = 2581.1$, 17 *df*) is significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating there is a significant difference between observed attendance, and the predicted NBD attendance. There is support for hypothesis H2.

Identification → Attitudinal Loyalty (Commitment)

> ***H3:*** *In a sports fan → sports team relationship, identification and attitudinal loyalty (commitment) are the same construct.*



The analysis shown in Figure 26 shows the relationship between Identification and Commitment to be significant, positive and strong. The standardised beta regression weight is 0.975 between the two constructs, and Identification explains 95% of the variance in Commitment. Clearly, in

a sports fan to sports team relationship these constructs are so similar they can be used interchangeably, and hypothesis H3 is supported.

Structural Model Results

The relationships between constructs are tested simultaneously in SEM, so first the overall model should be evaluated before examining individual relationships.

> ***H8:*** *The proposed Direct Effects model A, will better fit the data than either the Mediated model B or Justification of Effort model C.*

Table 19 compares the fit indicators for the proposed and two alternate models. The proposed Direct Effects model is non-significant, while the alternates are significant. Also, the Direct Effects model has lower values of chi-square, normed chi-square, RMSEA, RMR and CAIC, and higher GFI, TLI and CFI values than either of the two alternate models. The chi-square difference test confirms that the proposed model is significantly better than the two alternates. The inter-relationships between the variables in Model A explains 38% of the variance in Commitment/Identification, and 36% of the variance in Behavioural Loyalty.

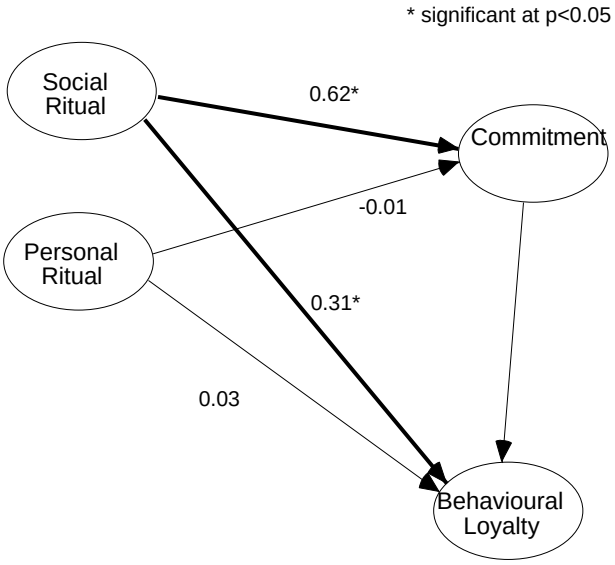
The Direct Effects model A best fits the data, and therefore, hypothesis H8 can not be rejected.

Fan Ritual

H4a: *The construct of fan ritual is two-dimensional comprising personal and social rituals.*

Exploratory factor analysis, conducted on the first half of the split sample, revealed a two factor structure for fan ritual. The scree plot shown in Figure 22 suggests two factors with Eigenvalues over 1. The Pattern Matrix Structure shown in Table 12 shows that the items that group together in Factor 1 are observable, social rituals. The items that comprise factor 2 are personal rituals, that can be performed individually with others not involved. This two factor structure for fan ritual was confirmed in SEM, using the second part of the split sample and is shown in Figure 23. There is support for hypothesis 4a.

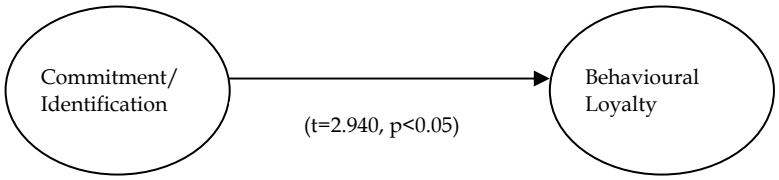
H4b: *Social rituals will have a stronger effect on behavioural loyalty and commitment than personal rituals.*



Examining the path coefficients above shows stronger relationships between social ritual and commitment (0.62), and social ritual and behavioural loyalty (0.31) than between personal ritual and commitment (-0.01) and personal ritual and behavioural loyalty (0.03). Coupled with the stronger path scores, the relationships between personal ritual and both commitment and behavioural loyalty are non-significant. There is support for hypothesis 4b.

Commitment/Identification → Behavioural Loyalty

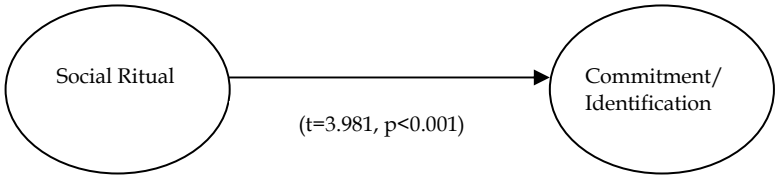
> ***H5:*** *Commitment/Identification with the team is positively associated with behavioural loyalty towards the team.*



As expected, and found in other studies, there is a significant and positive relationship between Commitment/Identification and Behavioural Loyalty. The t value of 2.940 is above the critical value of 1.96 at p = 0.05 indicating significance, and the standardised regression weight of 0.34 indicates the relationship is positive. There is support for hypothesis H5.

Ritual → Commitment/Identification

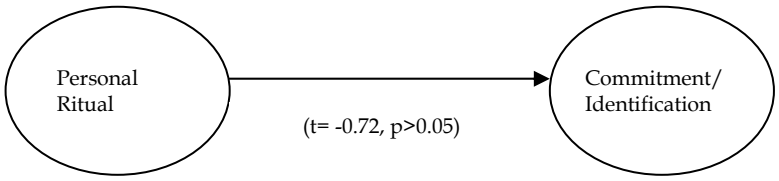
> ***H6a:*** *Social ritual is positively associated with commitment/identification towards the team.*



Results from the AMOS output reveal a significant and positive association between social ritual and commitment/identification. The standardised regression weight between the two constructs is 0.618 suggesting a 1 unit

change in social ritual correlates to a positive 0.618 unit change in commitment/identification. There is support for hypothesis H6a.

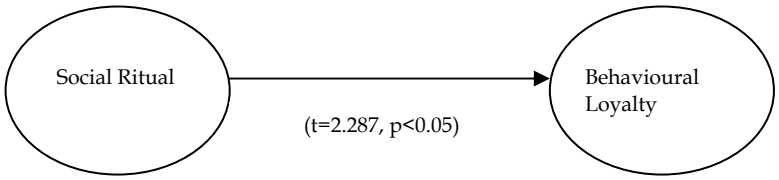
H6b: *Personal ritual is positively associated with commitment/ identification towards the team.*



There is no significant relationship between personal ritual and commitment/identification. The t value of -0.72 is below the 1.96 threshold, and therefore hypothesis H6b must be rejected – no significant relationship exists between personal ritual and Commitment/ Identification.

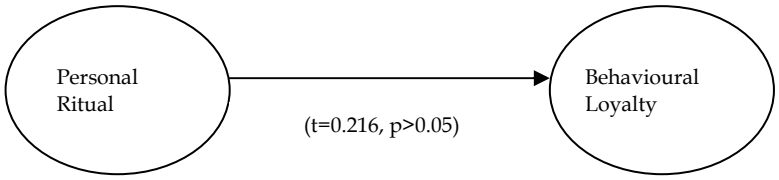
Social Ritual → Behavioural Loyalty

H7a*: Social ritual is positively associated with behavioural loyalty towards the team.*



The results of this analysis show there is a significant and positive relationship between Social Ritual and Behavioural Loyalty. The t value of 2.287 is significant, and the standardised regression weight of 0.31 indicates the relationship is positive. There is support for hypothesis H7a.

> ***H7b**: Personal ritual is positively associated with behavioural loyalty towards the team.*



There is no significant relationship between personal ritual and commitment/identification. The t value of 0.216 is below the 1.96 threshold, and therefore hypothesis H7b must be rejected – no significant relationship exists between Personal Ritual and Behavioural Loyalty.

Summary of Results

	Hypothesis	Result
H1	Motivation will have a stronger positive association with attitudinal loyalty than behavioural loyalty.	Supported
H2	Attendance at AFL games does not follow the negative binomial distribution.	Supported
H3	In a sports fan→ sports team relationship, identification and attitudinal loyalty (commitment) are the same construct.	Supported
H4a	The construct of fan ritual is two-dimensional comprising personal and social rituals.	Supported
H4b	Social rituals will have a stronger effect on behavioural loyalty and commitment than personal rituals.	Supported
H5	Commitment/Identification with the team is positively associated with behavioural loyalty towards the team.	Supported
H6a	Social ritual is positively associated with commitment/identification towards the team.	Supported
H6b	Personal ritual is positively associated with commitment/identification towards the team.	Rejected
H7a	Social ritual is positively associated with behavioural loyalty towards the team.	Supported
H7b	Personal ritual is positively associated with behavioural loyalty towards the team.	Rejected
H8	The proposed Direct Effects model A, will better fit the data than either the Mediated model B or Justification of Effort model C.	Supported

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Summary

One of the best examples of a broad product category that garners the uncommon loyalty described in this thesis is sports teams, so sport was used as the 'laboratory' to investigate loyalty. This research has produced several findings:

First, the findings support previous research on sports and attendance conducted in other countries suggesting that motivation to attend games better explains the psychological aspects of loyalty (commitment and identification) than actual attendance behaviour.

Second, the findings indicate that while the study of past behaviour (habit) and the NBD may be a good predictor of future purchase rates for consumer goods in stable markets, the same did not hold true for attendees of this team. This is not particularly surprising since one condition of the NBD is that purchases are independent of each other. Since such a large proportion of Australian football attendees are season ticket holders, seats are purchased a season at a time, but attendance is still a game by game decision. All is not lost, however, when investigating habit and sports.

Applying the NBD is only one way of using past behaviour to predict future behaviour.

Third, this study supports the findings of previous sports research that suggest the constructs of commitment and identification are so similar they can be used interchangeably, and further, that there is a positive relationship between commitment/identification and attendance at games. The more psychologically committed the fan, the more likely they are to attend. Comparing this result with other findings helps to validate this research.

Fourth, the results show that attendees perform two types of rituals on game day: personal rituals such as praying for their favourite team to win, and social rituals such as singing the team song with other members of the audience. While personal rituals seem to have no influence on either commitment/identification or attendance, there is a positive relationship between social ritual and these outcomes. This study can not conclude a causal relationship, but certainly ritual consumption of sports is important. Further, from closer inspection of the model, it seems that two of the social sub-rituals (singing the club song and wearing team colours) have the strongest relationship with commitment and attendance.

Limitations of the Study

Discussing the limitations of this study into loyalty and the rituals of consumption highlights possible future research directions which may correct some of these limitations. First, the findings of this investigation result from one main data collection at a game of professional football in Australia. It can only provide a snapshot of the situation, and a longitudinal study is recommended. To feel more comfortable using this new measure of fan ritual, the data collection should be both replicated at other Australian football matches, and then tested in other countries with other sports. To reflect sport and cultural differences, the measure should be refined to include those fan rituals common to all team sports – this would give the measure more power in detecting influences on attendance and commitment.

Also, the Fremantle Football Club, who graciously invited the researchers inside the ground on game day, is a relatively new entity, only playing their first competitive game in 1995. This has ramifications that may be significant when investigating ritual, tradition and history. Fremantle has not really had enough time to establish long lived rituals. Perhaps using the fans of older teams would strengthen the results? Still, Fremantle fans exhibit strong attitudinal and behavioural loyalty to their team despite the club's fairly unsuccessful 12 year history – Fremantle have yet to win even

one finals match – so maybe their fans are exactly the type of consumers of interest when studying uncommon loyalty.

Following on from this, when asking committed and identified sports fans about their team, responses tend to be skewed, producing non-normal data which can be statistically difficult to analyse. Although care was taken in this study to take into account any non-normal data, the results of these analyses should still be interpreted with some caution. Along the same lines, most of the respondents in this study were financial members of the Fremantle Football Club, and while the sample is consistent with the football attending population in Australia, this is not the case with other sports, and in other countries. It would be wise to use the findings here as a genesis for other sports studies.

The scale developed to measure fan ritual in this study simply marks the starting point. It is incomplete, and the mixed results on convergent validity show that it should be refined and then replicated in future studies. An expert panel should be convened to discuss fan rituals around the world in different team sports, to come up with a more definitive list from which the scale items can then be refined. If there are common rituals involved with attending sporting events around the world, then researchers should incorporate these into subsequent scales.

Analysis of the indicators of social ritual (see Figure 23) suggests social ritual may be multi-dimensional. Perhaps there are mainstream social rituals such as wearing team colours and singing the club song, and more 'hardcore' social rituals such as face painting or making a sign to bring to the game. Concentrating on measuring social rituals alone may help refine this construct.

Rather than relying on reported behaviour, it would be interesting to use stadium technology to track the attendance behaviour of fans. This, of course, may have ethical implications that will need to be explored. Currently, members with season tickets use bar-coded cards, and non-members use bar-coded single entry tickets to enter the ground, and so the team has the ability to track behaviour. Unfortunately it is impossible to know exactly who is using the ticket or member's card, so relying on self-reported behaviour is currently the best way to investigate this area.

There are other outcomes, besides attendance behaviour, that are important to sports marketers, and these also warrant investigation. This study opens up many possibilities for future research.

Future Studies

With athletes, researchers have found that the particular superstitious ritual executed before or during athletic performance varies according to the sport of the player (Bleak & Frederick, 1998). Would the same hold true for sports fans? Are the rituals employed by fans of soccer different to those performed by basketball fans, and does it serve the same purpose of belonging and belief? Merely observing rituals in field studies may not be enough to understand them, and perhaps researchers should gather intensive, qualitative data (such as Gibson et al., 2002) to further explore the meaning of ritual in everyday consumption activities (Rook, 1985).

Ritual and Age

Of some concern to sports marketers is the drop off in sporting attendance that takes place as people move in age from their 50s to their 60s (Hofacre & Burman, 1992). Coupled with the aging population trend in Australia, the United States and other countries, this could prove a significant threat to sports teams. As seen from the review of ritual earlier in this dissertation, rituals seem to strengthen with age, and become more powerful as they are repeated. Perhaps involving fans with attendance rituals is a way to keep them attending as they get older? Maybe teams can help create and foster rituals so that older fans, who are no longer able to

attend games, can still act like a fan and perhaps influence generations below them to become fans.

Ritual and Brand Equity

The basic principle of customer-based brand equity is that the power of a brand resides in the mind of a consumer and is generated from lived experiences such as purchase and usage, along with mediated experiences such as marketing communications (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Rituals can certainly effect how products are used, and the link between ritual and brand equity should be explored.

Other Goods and Services

Can marketers of other products learn from the study of ritual? Obvious services that have close ties with ritualistic behaviour such as religion would be an interesting fit. Certainly churches, synagogues and mosques are rich with ritual ceremonies, but marketers have also woven rituals into the purchase and usage of some consumer products. For example, US retail giant Wal-Mart assigns greeters to each entry point in their stores. They add little functional value (Underwood et al., 2001), but do provide ritual greetings for every customer along with perhaps a small sticker for each child. In Jamaica, managers of the all-inclusive resorts in Montego

Bay facilitate an induction ritual with all new visitors to introduce these guests to other guests, and enhance enjoyment of their visit. Colleges and universities have, for decades, promoted non-sporting rituals such as orientation and graduation as part of the student experience. Perhaps as a result, students are often fiercely loyal of their alma mater long after the graduation ceremony is complete. The HOGs (Harley Owners Group) meet regularly to socialise and ride their motorcycles together – a ritual that Harley Davidson goes to great lengths to facilitate and encourage.

Certainly service providers have an advantage over goods providers as they generally can control how a service is consumed, and the environment in which it is consumed. Starting new shared consumption rituals can be tricky however. If consumers see the ritual as merely a gimmick or a vehicle for greater consumption, then it may backfire. For example, during the halftime activities at a recent football game attended by this author, the field announcer attempted to include a sponsor's name in a team rally cry in a planned promotional activity. Fans simply stopped singing, and the announcer was left to complete the cry alone. However if consumers view the ritual as a bonding experience, that helps individuals identify with society and transforms learning from past to future generations, then the ritual may lead to stronger ties to the brand, and higher repeat purchase rates.

There is, of course, the danger of assuming that what is applicable to the sports environment may be equally applicable in other service markets. Professional sports team can operate under monopolistic conditions, and as discussed in this study, sports fans have a special relationship with their favourite team. The goal of future research, however, is to test this notion.

Personality and Culture

In much the same way that some consumers are more prone to use coupons/vouchers than others (Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, & Burton, 1990), an intriguing study would be one that tests whether some people have a higher propensity to be ritualistic than others, and if so, what the antecedent personality characteristics would be. Milgram (1977) asks these same questions about fanaticism. If certain personality traits lead to ritualistic behaviours, it would make sense for marketers to conduct personality tests on their customer or membership base. Parker (1984) suggests social rituals are influenced by both physiological and psychological arousal which further broadens the scope of antecedents. Donavan, Carlson and Zimmerman (2005) have begun this process by investigating the personality traits antecedent to identification. They found extraversion, agreeability, need for arousal and materialism to influence need for affiliation, which in turn influences identification. These traits

would be a good starting point in examining the personality-ritual link. Mowen (2004) also found a relationship between the personality trait of competitiveness and behaviours related to vicarious achievement such as watching sports. Future researchers can similarly analyse the ties between ritual and cultural background. Mannell (2005) calls for a vigorous examination of the cultural factors that causes differences in leisure consumption.

Contributions and Implications

In the Introduction section of this thesis, one broad research question was proposed to guide this investigation. ***How can marketers explain uncommon loyalty to a brand?*** The results of this study go part of the way towards answering this question. The literature review revealed that loyalty is two dimensional, and the behavioural dimension (attendance in the case of sports), is the desired outcome. The question of uncommon loyalty to a brand in this study becomes ***"Why do fans of sports teams keep attending games when their team consistently performs poorly"?***

Theoretically, uncommon behavioural loyalty to a team can partly be explained by how strongly consumers identify with the brand (define themselves in terms of brand association) and the rituals they participate in when involved with consumption of the brand. For example, fans with

strong psychological commitment to the team who also participate in social rituals such as singing the team song and wearing team colours are more likely to attend games. Whereas the link between brand identification and behaviour was established and replicated in previous studies, no other study has attempted to define consumption rituals, measure them and then test the relationship between ritual and behaviour.

This study has taken ritual out of its church roots and into mainstream secular society. Once researchers identify possible consumption rituals for other product categories, they can perform similar analyses to investigate the interrelationships between ritual and behavioural outcomes. Analysing Nabisco's television advertisement for its Oreo brand cookies provides an example. In the ad, a young boy tells his dog that to eat an Oreo, you must first twist it apart, then lick the filling before dunking the reconstructed cookie in milk and eating. Presumably, Oreo brand managers found evidence of this consumption ritual via observation, focus groups or other data collection techniques. The results of this study support their attempt to create a consumption ritual.

A second contribution from this study is that researchers can now define and measure consumption rituals, and that at least two dimensions of ritual exist, personal and social. Further, this study identified personal rituals as

being insignificant to consumption, while social rituals are significant and positively associated.

Marketers of sports teams should try to encourage and facilitate, wherever possible, social rituals within their supporter base. Certainly it makes sense that the stability and learning that rituals provide will influence consumption behaviour, but this study revealed that social rituals are important to consumption, while personal rituals are not. In 1997 when the University of Texas appointed football coach Mack Brown, he coined rallying cry to Texas fans: "***come early, be loud, stay late and wear orange with pride***". Whether he knew it or not, this helped formalise some social rituals with attending Texas games. Perhaps these rituals strengthened the social bonds amongst fans, and importantly between fans and the team.

The third theoretical contribution answers Rook's (1985) call for using fresh research constructs to gain a broader perspective on consumption. As exposed in the literature review, previous researchers have examined many constructs such as motivation, satisfaction, demographics, geographics, economics, commitment and identification to predict attendance. None have used ritual and so even though it has taken longer than twenty years, ritual is a fresh construct.

Another theoretical contribution is that more variance in attendance can now be explained when using both identification/commitment and ritual. From the literature review, the highest level of variance in attendance explained was 30% from Kahle et al's 1996 study. In this model, ritual and identification/commitment explains 36% of the variance in attendance.

Finally, the study of ritual helps researchers decode the psychological processes of consumers. While ritual must be performed, social rituals can also be observed, and so merely by observation researchers can gather information as to what is important for consumers, what they are learning from other consumers, and how strongly they identify with the brand.

Of course this also has implications for marketers outside of sports. Whether it's as simple as providing a puzzle or game for a child to play while waiting for their pizza to cook, to establishing and maintaining complex rituals such as the activities involved with the HOGs (Harley Owners Group), consumption rituals provide social interaction, learning, and a sense of history, while also strengthening attitudinal loyalty towards the brand, and purchase behaviour. The key for marketers is to facilitate ***social*** rituals, that involve many participants, while being careful not to appear manipulative. If consumers believe the rituals are simply to drive

increased purchase, they might be sceptical, and the ritual will not establish.

To illustrate, sports fans generally see their rituals at the game as not only enjoyable, but effective in helping their team perform better. Some of these rituals, such as Chicago Cubs fans who feel strong peer pressure to throw back home run balls hit by opposition players, evolve naturally without team facilitation. Other rituals, such as singing the team song are facilitated by the team who commission the song, and then play it at home games. The fact these rituals are associated with increased attendance and perhaps associated consumption such as food purchases, is largely lost on the attendees.

Hope?

One of the qualities that loyal sports fans of losing teams seem to have in abundance is hope. Hope that the team can turn things around, hope that even in a bad season the team can beat an archrival, hope that one day a championship will come and bragging rights can begin. While this author did not measure hope in this study, future researchers should investigate this construct, its applicability to the study of loyalty, and scrutinize its antecedents. Perhaps fans with abundant levels of hope will also be consumers who are more forgiving of service failures? Perhaps hopeful

people have lower expectations and therefore are less likely to be dissatisfied? Hope is a construct worth investigating – it may, along with commitment and ritual, provide an even better model for explaining uncommon behavioural loyalty.

Bill Simmons, avid New England Patriots fan and former writer for ESPN.com, nicely encapsulates the emotion of hope. He wrote this on the ESPN.com web-site the morning after the Patriots finally won a championship - Superbowl XXXVI - after more than 40 years of futility:

> *"Now I can die in peace. Now it all makes sense. You bleed for your team, you follow them through thick and thin, you monitor every free-agent signing, you immerse yourself in Draft Day, you purchase the jerseys and caps, you plan your Sundays around the games ... and there's a little rainbow waiting at the end. You can't see it, but you know it's there. It's there. It has to be there. So you believe. Have you ever felt totally overwhelmed? I'm telling you, keep the faith, keep believing, keep supporting your team -- there's a slight chance that it might be worth it some day. Just trust me."*

It seems fitting to conclude this dissertation focussing on hope for the future.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ritual Pre-test Questionnaire

Appendix B : Research Questionnaire

Instructions: The following survey collects data on the rituals that people perform when attending a professional sporting event as a spectator (not as an athlete). Please complete the questionnaire below by placing a ☑ in the box if you have ever engaged in this ritual relating to sports attendance. If you have, please answer the other questions relating to that ritual by circling the number that best describes your answer.

	Place a ☑ in the box next to those rituals you have performed. For those rituals you've marked with a ☑, please answer the other related questions.		**On those days when you attend a sporting event (as a spectator), how often do you perform this ritual?**					**If you perform this ritual, how much do you enjoy it?**					**If you perform this ritual, please indicate how effective you believe it is for helping your team win.**				
			Only Once	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Every game	Only a little				Very much	Not at all effective				Very effective
1	Paint or decorate any part of your body with team colours.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2	Make or buy a sign or banner and bring to the game.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3	Purchase any team merchandise.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4	Wear team colours when you attend the game.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5	Wear any part of the team uniform.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6	Sing with other members of the crowd.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7	Participate in an organised social event immediately before or after the game.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8	Verbally argue with or shout at other attendees.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9	Verbally argue with or shout at players.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10	Verbally argue with or shout at umpires.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Place a ☑ in the box next to those rituals you have performed. For those rituals you've marked with a ☑, please answer the other related questions.		**On those days when you attend a sporting event (as a spectator), how often do you perform this ritual?**					**If you perform this ritual, how much do you enjoy it?**					**If you perform this ritual, please indicate how effective you believe it is for helping your team.**				
			Only Once	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Every game	Only a little				Very much	Not at all effective				Very effective
11	Participate in the sport at halftime or fulltime (e.g. kick your own football at the end of the game).	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12	Expose part of your body in public that you normally wouldn't.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13	Physically fight with other attendees.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14	Eat the same pre-game meal on game day.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15	Wear a "lucky charm" that can be seen.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16	Wear a "lucky charm" that cannot be seen.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17	Individually pray for team success before or during the game.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18	As a group, pray for team success before or during the game.	☐	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Please briefly describe any other social activities you engage in either before, during or immediately after attending a game as a spectator:

Dear Participant,

You are kindly asked to answer the attached questionnaire about opinions, preferences and behaviour of sports attendees at AFL games. There are no risks or penalties for your participation in this study. The questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete.

- Please return the completed questionnaire to the University of WA researcher at the same place they handed it to you **before the end of the three-quarter time break.**

- Your choice of gift is limited to what remains when you return your questionnaire.

- Please remember that your participation in this study is voluntary. By completing the attached questionnaire you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study.

- Your personal details will only be used for the prize drawing, and will be destroyed immediately after this use. Personal details will not be linked to responses.

Thank you very much for your time. Enjoy the game!!

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The Research Ethics Committee at the University of Western Australia requires that all participants are informed that, if they have any complaint regarding the manner, in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or, alternatively to the Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee,

By checking the appropriate box ☑, please indicate which Fremantle games you attended at Subiaco Oval this season.

Date	Opponent	No	Yes
Saturday, 27 March	Carlton	☐	☐
Sunday, 11 April	Adelaide	☐	☐
Sunday, 25 April	Geelong	☐	☐
Saturday, 1 May	West Coast	☐	☐
Saturday, 8 May	St Kilda	☐	☐
Saturday, 22 May	Brisbane	☐	☐
Sunday, 6 June	Melbourne	☐	☐
Saturday, 19 June	Port Adelaide	☐	☐
Saturday, 10 July	Kangaroos	☐	☐

By checking the appropriate box ☑, please indicate which future Fremantle games you will attend for the remainder of this season.

Date	Opponent	No	Yes
Friday, 6 August	Collingwood	☐	☐
Sunday, 22 August	West Coast	☐	☐

Please answer the following questions related to your attendance of AFL games.

How many total people, including yourself, do you normally attend AFL games with?	_____
If you were undecided about whether you should come to a game, what one thing could your favourite team do to increase the likelihood of you attending?	_____ _____
If you were undecided about whether you should come to a game, what one factor most frequently prevents you from coming to watch your favourite team play?	_____ _____
At what age did you start attending football games as a spectator? (can be either AFL, WAFL, VFL or SANFL games)	_____
How many AFL games did you attend last year?	_____
How many AFL games do you plan on attending next year?	_____

By checking the appropriate box ☑, please indicate your favourite AFL team. (please choose one team only)

☐ Fremantle 01	☐ West Coast 02
☐ Adelaide 03	☐ Brisbane 04
☐ Carlton 05	☐ Collingwood 06
☐ Essendon 07	☐ Geelong 08
☐ Hawthorn 09	☐ Kangaroos 10
☐ Melbourne 11	☐ Port Adelaide 12
☐ Richmond 13	☐ St Kilda 14
☐ Sydney 15	☐ Bulldogs 16

Keeping your favourite team in mind, please answer the following questions.

For how long has this been your favourite team?	_____ years		
Who or what was the *most* important influence in helping you choose your favourite team? (please choose one only)	☐ Father 01	☐ Friends/Peers 02	
	☐ Mother 03	☐ TV/media 04	
	☐ Brother/Sister 05	☐ Cousin 06	
	☐ Grandparent(s) 07	☐ Sports coach 08	
	☐ Uncle/Aunt 09	☐ Personally knowing a player 10	
	☐ The city in which you live 11	☐ Other 12 (please specify)	_____
Have you ever changed your choice of favourite team?	☐ No	☐ Yes	
If you have changed, what was previously your favourite team?	☐ Fremantle 01	☐ West Coast 02	☐ Not Applicable
	☐ Adelaide 03	☐ Brisbane 04	
	☐ Carlton 05	☐ Collingwood 06	
	☐ Essendon 07	☐ Geelong 08	
	☐ Hawthorn 09	☐ Kangaroos 10	
	☐ Melbourne 11	☐ Port Adelaide 12	
	☐ Richmond 13	☐ St Kilda 14	
	☐ Sydney 15	☐ Bulldogs 16	
If you have changed, what was the main reason for your change?	_____		☐ Not Applicable
	_____		

When attending sporting events, fans sometimes perform rituals on game day. Please indicate by checking the box ☑ if you have ever engaged in any of these rituals.

If you have, please answer the other questions relating to that ritual by circling the number that best describes your answer.

Ritual **On game day as a spectator have you ever…..**		**If you answered "Yes", how often did you perform this ritual while attending a game?**					**If you answered "Yes", please indicate how effective you believe it is for helping your team.**				
		Only Once	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Every Game**	**Not At All Effective**	**Slightly Effective**	**Generally Effective**	**Effective**	**Strongly Effective**
Painted or decorated any part of your body with team colours.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Brought a sign or banner to the game.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Purchased any team merchandise at a game.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Worn team colours when you attend the game.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Worn any part of the team uniform (jersey, etc).	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Sung the club song with other members of the crowd.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a social event with friends immediately before or after the game.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Verbally argued with or shouted at other attendees.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Verbally argued with or shouted at players.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Verbally argued with or shouted at the umpires.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in the sport at fulltime (e.g. kick your own football at the end of the game).	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Exposed part of your body in public that you normally wouldn't.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Physically fought with other attendees.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Worn a "lucky charm" that can be seen by others.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Worn a "lucky charm" that cannot be seen by others.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Prayed for team success before or during the game.	☐ No ☐ Yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

By circling the appropriate number, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements below.

		Strongly Disagree	Generally Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Generally Agree	Strongly Agree
A	I'm more of a fan of individual players than I am of the entire team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X	I would be willing to defend my favourite team publicly, even if it caused controversy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
L	I feel like I have won when my team wins.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I	I find attending games to be very exciting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N	I like attending games because they provide me with a distraction from my daily life for a while.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D	I like games where the outcome is uncertain.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H	Attending games gives me a chance to bond with my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C	I like to talk with other people sitting near me at games.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D	I prefer watching a close game rather than a one-sided game.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G	I think the players are good role models for young girls and boys.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B	Attending games gives me a chance to bond with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X	I consider myself a committed fan of my favourite team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E	I come to games to support the whole team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J	The games provide affordable entertainment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I	I like the excitement associated with attending games.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	The main reason why I attend is to cheer for my favourite player.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G	The players provide inspiration for young people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
L	When the team wins, I feel a personal sense of achievement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

By circling the appropriate number, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements below

		Strongly Disagree	Generally Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Generally Agree	Strongly Agree
D	A close game between two teams is more enjoyable than a blow-out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B	An important reason why I attend games is to spend quality time with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J	I attend games because it is an entertaining event for a reasonable price.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
L	I feel a sense of accomplishment when the team wins.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X	I could never change my affiliation from my favourite team to another team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	I watch the games because of the individual players more than of the team competing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C	Attending games has given me a chance to meet other people with similar interests as myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B	I enjoy sharing the experience of attending games with friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N	Getting away from the routine of everyday life is an important reason why I attend a game.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E	I am a fan of the entire team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H	An important reason why I attend games is to spend quality time with my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G	Players provide inspiration for girls and boys.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X	I would watch my favourite team regardless of which team they were playing against at the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N	The games provide me with an opportunity to escape from the reality of my daily life for a while.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E	I consider myself a fan of the team more than a fan of a single player.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C	I enjoy interacting with other spectators and fans when attending games.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H	I enjoy sharing the experience of attending games with family members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J	Games are great entertainment for the price.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I	I enjoy the excitement surrounding the games.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please answer the following questions about yourself. Your individual responses will *NOT* be disclosed to anyone except the UWA research team.

What is your age?	__ __	
In which postcode do you reside?	__ __ __ __	☐ I live outside of W.A.
What is your gender? ☐ Female ☐ Male		

We would like to conduct a very short follow up survey with you at the end of the season that comprises two questions and should only take two minutes of your time. If you agree to leave your contact information below, you will be entered into a draw to receive a $100 Fremantle Football Club merchandise voucher. There are two vouchers to be won.

Once you have responded to the follow-up survey, your contact information will be destroyed.

Name	_ _	
E-mail address	_ _	
Telephone number (choose the number that's most convenient for you)	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	Is this a…. ☐ Work number? ☐ Home number? ☐ Mobile number?

Please answer the following questions about football membership.

Are you a current member of the Fremantle Football Club?	☐ Yes					☐ No you have finished, thank you
If you are a member, do you have a reserved seat as part of your Fremantle Football Club membership?	☐ Yes			☐ No		
	0% likelihood	1-20% likelihood	21-40% likelihood	41-60% likelihood	61-80% likelihood	81-100% likelihood
If you are a Fremantle member, how likely are you to rejoin next year at the same membership level?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If you are a Fremantle member, how likely are you to increase your membership level next year?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you!

Please return the completed questionnaire to the UWA researcher at the same place it was handed it to you. You should do this before the end of the three-quarter time break.